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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

DENNIS GOODWIN — IN DEFENCE OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS

W. H. EVANS — TOWN PLANNING PROBLEMS

ERNST WANGERMANN — ROSA LUXEMBURG

DISCUSSION:

T. CORBISHLEY, S.J. / D. B. RUNCORN — THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND MARXISM

STANISLAV STRUMILIN / E. ARAB OGLY / JEAN FELDMAR — NO ROOM FOR HOMO SAPIENS?

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Marxism Today

Vol. 10 **No. 9**

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Editorial Comments

IN the discussion on the present crisis the devaluation lobby was active. The *Economist* was prepared to consider it as part of a package deal. So were the *Financial Times*, the *Observer*, the *Spectator*. In the past devaluation as a partial remedy has been hinted at both in the National Institute of Economic and Social Research *Economic Review*, and in the Bulletin of the London and Cambridge Economic Service.

It also seems clear that quite a number of business men are firmly wedded to the idea that devaluation must come, and are inclined to back that opinion at every opportunity.

Most supporters of devaluation argue that the disproportion between Britain's exports and imports indicates a basic imbalance (however caused), that this imbalance is endemic and only a once and for all devaluation of sterling will enable Britain to make a new start. What does this mean?

Devaluation means that the exchange rate of the pound is lowered in relation to that of other currencies. Americans acquiring pounds pay 2.80 dollars for a pound. If the pound was devalued Americans could obtain it for (perhaps) 2.40 dollars. This means that the Americans could buy a given quantity of British goods for fewer dollars than they could before devaluation, i.e. British goods would be cheaper for them. In the same way American goods would be dearer for British importers.

The same would apply to all major countries which keep their currencies at their previous exchange rate. It would be easier for them to buy British goods and more difficult for them to sell their goods to Britain. This would right the balance of imports and exports.

What is sometimes forgotten is that this involves a cut in the purchasing power of real wages and salaries right across the board. It is estimated that devaluation would raise British prices by 2 per cent for a 10 per cent devaluation, and 3 per cent for a 15 per cent devaluation.

But it is unlikely that the trade unions will accept this situation without pressing for increased wages. When for example Cripps devalued in 1949 Ernest Bevin asked the TUC to persuade the unions not to ask for wage increases to compensate for the first 5 per cent increase in the cost of living. The unions could not be persuaded.

The unions are unlikely to accept this so that most advocates of devaluation argue that it should be accompanied by deflation, i.e. by the deliberate creation of unemployment in order to prevent the unions going for increased wages.

This means a sharp change in attitudes. Hitherto devaluation has been advocated as an alternative to Government measures to create unemployment. Now it is being admitted by many supporters of devaluation that this policy must be underpinned by an increase in unemployment plus a wage or salaries freeze.

So beware the idea that devaluation is something more progressive or less dangerous to the workers than old-fashioned deflation.

Long-Term Wage Policy

The total wage freeze for six months, and the near total wage freeze for a further six, is without precedent in British industrial relations. Those who argued that the incomes policy would lead to a complete state regulation of wages have been justified quicker than they expected.

It appears that when the freeze is over there will be a thoroughly worked out Government long term policy to keep wages within the rise of productivity.

What kind of long term wages policy is likely to be imposed in these circumstances (always provided the unions have not thawed the freeze meantime)?

The Institute of Personnel Management have just issued a brochure "The Development of Incomes Policy" by John Corinna, who thinks that Brown's recent policy was only a useful stop-gap and goes on to sketch the elements of a long term incomes policy. "To construct an acceptable and 'socially just' incomes system will take *generations* of trial and error" he tells us. Evidently under the capitalist system too.

Mr. Corinna's suggestion is that both the Trades Union Congress and the Confederation of British Industries should get power from their constituent bodies to negotiate, with the assistance of the Government, a "master agreement, which would govern the general wage movement, indicating the absolute or percentage increase in wages compatible with the solidarity principle and price stability". So the autonomy of unions or groups of unions in an industry to bargain collectively is largely to disappear.

The trade unions affiliated to the TUC and the firms affiliated to the CBI, "must recognise their obligation to the public and their central organisa-

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tions especially when these obligations seem to conflict with immediate private interests". So not only shop floor bargaining but industrial bargaining, it is argued, should proceed along lines sanctioned by the TUC and the FBI. Surely an elaborate scheme for reducing effective trade union democracy to zero.

Yet it is not impossible that some such scheme will emerge and have to be combated. For the whole economic policy of the Labour Government, seeking as it does to subordinate the unions to capitalist policies, finds trade union democracy to be its enemy.

Wilson the Opportunist

Like all opportunists the Prime Minister is prepared to pick up any argument which lies to hand and use it even if it contradicts all that he has been previously arguing. Thus he told us in his speech introducing the deflationary measures on July 20th:

> "But abundant opportunities abroad for British products—which are competitive enough in terms of quality and price—are being lost owing to shortage of labour. Order books are too long and delivery dates excessively protracted."

The propagandists for an incomes policy have been telling us that British exports were too dear because the workers have been pushing up wages too fast, as compared with their competitors.

Now we are told that British export firms are competitive enough in terms of "quality, performance and price", that their order books are more than full, so that their delivery dates are protracted and what they are really suffering from is shortage of labour.

This is what has often been suspected, that Britain's export difficulties are due not so much to higher costs of British goods, but that too few firms are engaged in the export business. This is not a situation which can be remedied by attacks on wages, on the contrary standstills on wages could make it more difficult for export firms to attract workers. To use one of the clichés of this age, incomes policy is largely irrelevant to the problems of the export trade.

No Price Freeze

To make its wage and salaries freeze palatable to the unions Mr. Wilson in his speech called for "a twelve months standstill on prices of all goods and services". This was meant to convey the impression that the Government was acting quite fairly by matching a wage stop by a price stop. In everything that Wilson does there is a catch however. The price stop will be modified by the fact that *some* price increases will be allowed if the cost of imported raw materials rises, or if the Government imposes taxation which results in an increase in prices.

These are very important loopholes indeed. For raw material prices are going up steadily. (Indeed this is a factor in the balance of payment difficulties.) And in addition to the new taxes the Government imposed on Wednesday, 20th July, there will be increases in prices as firms pass on the Selective Employment Tax to the consumers.

Any trade union which accepts the wage freeze must do it in the knowledge that prices are bound to rise in the months to come and that the Government price policy is a dead duck.

African Liberation: Next Steps

The last decade has seen Africa move into the centre of the world political arena. The national liberation movements and their struggles for freedom are now the concern of wide sections of the people of the world, and the problems of the new African states are discussed in an ever growing stream of books, journals, lectures and discussions.

Our readers will be interested in the seminar being organised by this journal on *African Liberation: Next Steps*, on Saturday, October 1st, at the NUFTO Hall, Jockey's Fields, from 9.30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The African peoples still struggling for independence face the most brutal forms of repression either from foreign Governments like the Portuguese and the Spanish, or from racist minority Governments as in South Africa and Rhodesia. They face the most desperate forms of resistance from their oppressors who are directly and indirectly bolstered up by the Western Powers; their struggles have international implications and repercussions.

Recent events in some independent states, with the overthrow of Governments by army and police officers, raise important problems about the post-independence situation. All socialists are anxious to see a liberated Africa moving on from political independence to the building of new socialist states, overcoming the poverty and under-development of their colonial past. This seminar will be an opportunity for the discussion of some of these questions.

Marxism Today is bringing together at the seminar well-known specialists on Africa. Thomas Hodgkin and Ken Post, University lecturers and authors of books on Africa, have both worked in various African countries and have studied problems of political parties and political developments. Jack Woddis, head of the International Department of the Communist Party and Idris Cox, his colleague, have produced valuable Marxist work on Africa and the problems of national liberation. Joe Matthews and Nelson Samkange from the African National Congress and the Zimbabwe African People's Union are representatives in this country of their liberation movements.

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This is an opportunity for those who are concerned with the problem of Africa's future, to hear the views of specialists and to take part in discussion on the two themes: (i) *Forces of the African Revolution* and (ii) *Africa's Future—Capitalism or Socialism?* Tickets can be obtained from the Editorial Office, 27 Bedford Street, London, WC2, or from Central Books, 37 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1, price 2s. 6d., or payment can be made at the door.

Plots, Plots and Still More Plots!

As long as trade unions have existed they have struggled for higher wages and shorter hours. That is, indeed, why, some two hundred years ago, they first began to be formed.

As long as trade unions have organised strikes, employers and reactionary governments have tried to discredit them and explain them away in terms of "mysterious plots", "international conspiracies", 'foreign gold".

Let us recommend to your attention the Report of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association (First International), which was drafted by Marx in preparation for the Fourth Congress of the International, held at Basle in Switzerland in September 1869.

1868-69, it should be remembered, was a period of large strikes in many parts of Europe, and for many of these the General Council, from its base in London, organised campaigns of solidarity and tried to prevent the import of foreign workers as blacklegs.

One of the strikes was that of the Basle ribbon-weavers which met the violent opposition not only of the masters but of the "High and Honourable State Council", who accused the International of fomenting the strike. They even, in the words of Marx, sent a secret envoy to London to "ascertain the dimensions of the International's general treasury box". "Orthodox Christians as they are", he commented, "if they had lived at the time of nascent Christianity, they would . . . have spied into St. Paul's banking account at Rome".

A little later the building workers and the compositors came out on strike in Geneva. As in Basle, the Geneva authorities accused the hidden hand of the International.

You can study this Report along with a mass of fascinating material (General Council Minutes, leaflets, reports, resolutions, conference documents, etc.) in the third volume of the *Documents of the First International*,[1] that has just been published. The first two volumes are still available and the others will appear later. The third volume is particularly interesting as it covers the beginning of the struggle against anarchist trends inside the International, and also the period of the third (Brussels) and fourth (Basle) Conferences of the IWMA.

[1] *Documents of the First International*, Volume III, 1868-1870, Lawrence & Wishart, 21s.

Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism

We are glad to publish in this issue of *Marxism Today* two further contributions to the Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism—one by Father Thomas Corbishley, S.J. and the other by the Rev. D. B. Runcorn.

There is an interesting section on "Communism and Religion" in the Draft Programme of the Communist Party of the United States which was discussed at the recent National Convention of the Party.

Our American comrades put their views as follows:[2]

> "(1) We oppose all attempts to create division and antagonism among the people along religious lines. Accordingly, our Party is made up of believers and non-believers. What unites its ranks is a common social-political outlook.

[2] *Program of the Communist Party USA (Draft)*, Political Affairs Publishers, New York.

MARXISM TODAY SEMINAR,
Saturday, October 1st, 1966

AFRICAN LIBERATION—NEXT STEPS

(i) *Forces of the African Revolution:* 9.30 a.m.-1 p.m. Speakers: Thomas Hodgkin, Joe Matthews, Jack Woddis.

(ii) *Africa's Future: Capitalism or Socialism?* 2.30 p.m.-6 p.m. Speakers: Idris Cox, Ken Post, Nelson Samkange.

Chairman: James Klugmann, Editor, MARXISM TODAY

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"(2) Marxists disagree philosophically with the supernatural, mystical elements of religion; nevertheless we recognise many positive, humanist values in ethical and moral precepts of the several religions. We salute the increasing attempts of social-minded religious individuals and groups to apply the positive precepts of their faiths to the struggle for a better life on earth. A salutary development of our time has been the growing involvement of clergymen of all faiths, frequently on the front lines, in the battles for civil rights, peace, civil liberties and economic welfare. To all such efforts we extend the welcome hand of friendship and solidarity.

"(3) We subscribe to the fundamental tenets of democracy that are deeply imbedded in American tradition (even though they are too often violated): the right to freedom of conscience (which includes, of course, the right to atheistic convictions as well as religious beliefs), and the separation of church and state.

"(4) Full freedom of conscience and worship will be guaranteed in a socialist United States."

Our colleagues, *The Marxist Quarterly* of Canada, have produced a special issue devoted to "Christianity and Marxism in Dialogue".[3] Besides contributions from Canadian Marxists it contains a number of important contributions from Marxists of other countries including the relevant sections of the Report of Luigi Longo to the 11th Congress of the Italian Communist Party and the lecture delivered by Roger Garaudy at St. Michael's College, Toronto —the first time, incidentally, that a leading Marxist had ever addressed Canada's major centre of Roman Catholic learning.

A House on Clerkenwell Green

A good many readers of *Marxism Today* must have visited, at one time or another, the old building on Clerkenwell Green, London, where the Marx Memorial Library is now housed.

The full story of "Marx House" and of its associations with the labour movement during a long period has now been told by Andrew Rothstein, in a little book called *A House on Clerkenwell Green* recently published by Lawrence and Wishart at 7s. 6d. He has traced all the tenancies since it was built in the 18th century. It began as a charity school, at one time it was a pub, at another a grocer's shop, and again and again it has served as assembly rooms and offices for working-class organisations—up to 1933, when the Marx Memorial Library was established there. As well as its use by British workers, the building has close associations with the international labour movement and is visited yearly by many foreign guests.

Andrew Rothstein's book is well worth buying, for its intrinsic interest, interesting photographs, and the account it gives of the historical development of labour.

The Police and Civil Liberties

Lawrence and Wishart have announced the publication, towards the end of this month, of a new book about the British Police—*The Police and Civil Liberties*, by Stuart Bowes (price 45s.). Some of the chapter headings indicate its scope: The Police and the Organised Workers, The Police and the Fascists, Police Obstruction of Free Political Expression, The Special Branch, Telephone-tapping and Letter-opening, The Magistracy and the Police, the Press and the Police.

One of the qualities of the book lies in its comprehensive and very convincing documentation. Newspaper reports, court records, police records and eye-witness accounts are quoted throughout to prove what the publishers' blurb calls "a very disturbing picture of police violence and police spying employed for political purposes".

Despite experience, there are still a good many illusions in the progressive movement of this country about the police, and about what interests they serve and what orders they obey. This book will do much to dispel them.

Academic Recognition

Academic recognition in Britain of scholars in socialist countries is still sufficiently rare to be worth noting when it occurs.

Readers may be interested to know of two academic distinctions awarded here in recent months to Soviet scientists. One was an honorary degree (doctorate) of Glasgow University awarded to Academician L. V. Kantorovitch, the Soviet inventor of what is now known as "linear programming", one of the three mathematical economists who were mentioned in these Notes (*Marxism Today*, July 1965) as recipients last year of Lenin Prizes. The other is the election to an Honorary Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge, of Academician P. Kapitsa, the well-known nuclear physicist, Director of the Institute of Physical Problems in Moscow. Kapitsa worked for some years under Rutherford in Cambridge in the 1920s, returning to Moscow in the 1930s. A month or two ago he paid his first return visit to Cambridge, when he gave a lecture at Trinity College (where he formerly was in the 1920s) on the training of young scientists in the Soviet Union —a matter with which he has been prominently associated during the past ten to fifteen years.

[3] *The Marxist Quarterly*, No. 17, Spring 1966, Progress Books, Toronto.

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In Defence of Trade Union Rights

Dennis Goodwin

AT the present time British Trade Unionism finds itself facing, and compelled to mobilise its forces against, fresh and far reaching legislation, to be enacted by a Labour Government, with possibly more to come, imposing severe restrictions on its freedom of action, and opening the door to what could become a major onslaught. As the economic winds blow colder so the danger increases. Now the Monopoly-dictated Government offensive against wages and living standards and for the creation of widespread unemployment is under way. So the offensive against Trade Union rights is taking place just at the moment when Trade Union strength is needed, as never before in this generation, to defend the interests of the working class and the people.

It is no accident that the threats of the new Prices and Incomes Bill and the mounting pressure by the organisations of Monopoly Capital on the Donovan Commission have evoked the utmost alarm among trade unionists, in many cases cutting across previous ideas of "right", "centre", and "left", and that a powerful movement for trade union rights is developing.

This movement has its roots centuries deep in the struggle of British wage earners for the right to organise, to take effective action, to strike, to solidarity, to be political, to strive and work for fundamental change as well as for immediate needs.

The ruling class sought always to prevent every forward step, resisted organisation where it felt it possible to do so by brute force, and again and again brought the law to its aid—to provide the legal sanction for the use of force.

The Heritage of the Struggle

The purpose of this article is not to attempt an extensive historical survey of the struggle against anti-union legislation. But the briefest survey is nevertheless necessary, if the motivation, purpose, and significance of the present "onslaught by law" on the trade unions is to be grasped.

Compulsory wage fixing by the State assuming legal powers goes back to 1349 and was designed to prevent wage labour from increasing its "price" in the post-Black Death severe labour shortage.

The legislation under Elizabeth I in 1562 laid down compulsory annual contracts for workmen; a working day of up to 12½ hours in non-winter months. Wages were fixed by the Justices and forced labour introduced on pain of imprisonment.

Painfully, slowly, steadily, organisation was built up, destroyed, and built up yet again to a point where by the second half of the 18th century fresh legal sanctions were necessary for the new dominant capitalist class to use against the "combinations".

So came the series of Combination Acts of 1754 ("An act to prevent unlawful combination of workmen employed in woollen manufactures"), 1774, 1799, and 1800.

The 1799 Act indicated the employers' problem:

> "Whereas great numbers of journeymen, manufacturers and workmen in various parts of this kingdom have by unlawful meetings and combinations endeavoured to obtain advance of their wages and *to effect other illegal purposes* . . ." (my italics—D.G.)

and went on to make contracts to act together illegal, meetings illegal, organising finances illegal, all on pain of prison and forfeiture of funds.

Twenty-five years of struggle and pressure forced the 1824 repeal of these Combination laws—but the unions were not legalised, nor was the right to strike. Penalties remained for "violence, threats, and intimidation" but the crime of conspiracy on those "combining to improve their conditions of work" was removed, and in fact a measure of legality achieved for strikes.

A year later—1825—an amending Act took away part of what had been won. Permission to "combine" was limited. Conspiracy charges could be laid if a worker persuaded another to strike, and combinations made illegal if they were "in restraint of trade".

Master and Servant

Between 1824 - 1848 big struggles took place around the Master and Servants Acts.

The Acts meant that an employer, if he broke a contract of service with a worker, could be sued for damages or payment; but the worker sued for breach was charged with a criminal offence and could be imprisoned. The "Master" could summon witnesses on his own behalf. The "servant" could

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not. A single Justice of the Peace could order a worker's arrest, try his case, and imprisonment was an obligatory sentence on the "servant" if found guilty. There was no right of appeal. Nor did prison wipe out the debt. The "servant" could be imprisoned again and again.

The high point of the first half of the 19th century was Tolpuddle in 1833.

The crime of the Men of Dorset was that they sought to form a Trade Union, although the legal pretext for their conviction and banishment was alleged conspiracy to administer an illegal oath. The "legal" basis of this "crime" was the 1797 Act passed in an atmosphere of panic following the naval mutiny of the Nore.

The immediate issues on which the Tolpuddle agricultural labourers fought and around which they sought to build up their organisation was the demand for wages equal to those being paid in other districts.

Experience had taught them that they could rely on no "saviour from on high" but had to build their own organisation if they were to advance.

> "Why should we not form a trade union? We know it is vain to seek redress from employers, magistrates, or parsons"

wrote Loveless.

The Judge—Baron Williams—was to give him a classic answer:

> "If the men had been allowed to go on with their wicked plans they would have ruined their masters, stagnated trade, and destroyed property."

Mass action brought the six men of Dorset back from the hulks and the penal settlements. A great victory for trade unionism had been won, but from the 1850s on, again and again the weapon of anti-union legislation was used to hold back, defeat, or frustrate trade union struggle and organisation.

In 1851 Mr. Justice Earle delivered another in the string of class judgements declaring against

> "the right to combine together to induce men already in the employ of other masters for the purpose of compelling those masters to raise their wages."

making it virtually impossible, within the law, to organise an effective strike, or warn employers that a strike would take place, or use the possibility of a strike as a bargaining weapon.

Picketing was restrained, and although in 1859 peaceful picketing was declared legal, again and again the courts interpreted the law on picketing against the workers.

In 1871 Trade Union growth and pressure found its reflection in the Trade Union Act of that year. The Unions were no longer to be subject to prosecution for conspiracy. Limited protection for Trade Union funds was enacted and strike action legalised.

But the Criminal Law Act of the same year took away much of what the Trade Union Act had given. It was legal to join a union—but also for an employer to sack a man for doing so. It was legal to strike, but legal for the employer to charge him with coercion.

The remaining years of the 19th century saw the 1875 Trade Union Act, easing conspiracy charges but making breaches of contract in public utilities a criminal offence and imposing more onerous requirements for legal picketing.

It saw too in 1894 the Merchant Shipping Acts—now known to millions as a result of the historic seamen's struggle of 1966—which while not specifically a trade union Act, in fact placed dictatorial powers in the hands of the Master and the companies and put enormous obstacles in the way of trade union organisation in the Merchant Marine.

Taff Vale

The new century had been hardly born before a new and major legal offensive developed against the Unions, opened up by a strike in August 1900 of the Society of Railway Servants in Taff Vale.

The Railway Company alleged the 1875 Act had been broken and action was taken against the Union, its General Secretary and another official, and asked for an injunction to restrain them.

The big questions were—could a Union be sued and its funds made liable for damages?—Could a Union be sued in its own name?

The Judge decided in favour of the Company. The Court of Appeal reversed the judgement but the House of Lords found for the Company.

This meant that union funds could be attacked and unions could be held responsible for the action of their members.

The magnitude of the issues involved in the Taff Vale Judgement can be expressed in three statements made at the time. Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1902 in their book *Industrial Democracy* wrote:

> "A clear majority of our judges evidently believe quite honestly that trade unionism—meaning the enforcement of common rules on a whole trade—is anomalous, objectionable, detrimental to English industry, and even a wicked infringement of individual liberty which Parliament has been foolishly persuaded to take out of the category of crime."

Lord Haldane, who criticised the Judgement as "judge made law" stated:

> "It was contrary to the belief which had been entertained about it widely since the Royal Commission had considered it many years previously, and by the trade unions themselves as well as by some judges. For a trade union was not a corporation and if it could be sued its benefit funds were at the mercy

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> of those who had sued it, in respect of what were merely trade disputes."

Vaughan Nash, editor of a radical paper of the day, *New Age*, with a certain prophetic insight wrote:

> "The unions will henceforth have to fight the lawyers as well as the employers, they will have to contend with judges with a taste for judge-made law . . . there must be a stronger Labour Party in Parliament and a definite fighting programme."

But the unions soon faced the force of capitalist law when they entered the path of political action to change the law.

The Labour Representation Committee (forerunner of the Labour Party) formed in England in 1900, drew its main financial support from the Trade Unions. A legal judgement against the Yorkshire miners in 1903 declared such support "misapplication of trade union funds" and rule books were frantically amended to try and get round this barrier.

In 1906 however, the Liberal "landslide" election, secured with Labour support, led to the 1906 Trades Dispute Act which declared that a trade union could, under no circumstances, be "capable of being sued in tort"; that a trade dispute was not a conspiracy, that picketting was lawful, and that inducement to break contracts was not grounds for action.

The 1927 Trades Dispute Act

The 1906 Act, in effect, nullified the Taff Vale judgement.

Within three years the Osborne Judgement of 1909 had declared that a Trade Union was not entitled to political funds, that such funds were illegal.

An enormous outcry followed until in 1913 the Trade Union Act declared:

> "any . . . union shall have the power to apply the funds of the union for any lawful objects or purpose for the time being authorised under its constitution."

At the same time it established the right of members to "contract out" of paying the political levies.

The first world war had seen important legal developments in relation to compulsory arbitration (which were to be carried further forward in the Second World War and have great relevance to the current situation around Prices and Incomes legislation).

The rising tide of class struggle after the war found its highest point in the magnificent unity, courage, determination of the General Strike of 1926.

Even in the midst of that class confrontation the ruling class sought for some legal weapon or interpretation to use.

Sir John Simon declared:

> "The General Strike is not a strike at all. It is very different . . . a strike properly understood is perfectly lawful . . . (but) the General Strike is an utterly illegal proceeding."

And Justice Asbury:

> "The so-called General Strike called by the TUC is illegal . . . not protected by the 1906 Trades Dispute Act."

Havelock Wilson, then General Secretary of the National Union of Seamen sued the officials of his own Tower Hill Branch, who had called the seamen out in response to the General Strike call, claiming that the General Strike was illegal (thus sowing some of the seeds of May 16th, 1966!).

The argument was that the strike was not in support of a genuine Trades Dispute and was therefore outside the law on strikes as expressed in the 1906 Act.

Fearful of the consequences of using the legal weapon, the ruling class relied on other means—the support of the Right Wing leaders in the TUC to break the strike, and having done so organised its revenge on the unions by the 1927 Trades Dispute Act.

This robbed the unions of most of the 1906 and 1913 gains.

Sympathetic strikes were made illegal. Trades disputes were defined in the most narrow sense. Imprisonment was legislated for up to two years for illegal strikes. Expulsion from the unions for blacklegging was prohibited. Strike funds were debarred, picketing further limited and constrained.

Again, obstacles were put in the way of the unions using political funds, by the method of "contracting in"—a special declaration which had to be signed by any member agreeing to make a political fund subscription.

The "trade union closed shop" by local authorities was made illegal and major barriers put in the way of effective trade unionism in the Civil Service.

This was the Act under which trade unionism had to work throughout the years of crisis and depression, and was not to be repealed until 1946 under the first post-war Labour Government which, with its huge majority, nevertheless failed—or refused—to take the opportunity then to strengthen the power of the unions, an omission the significance of which is all the greater in the light of subsequent developments.

The Second World War

Under wartime conditions a series of legal restrictions were enacted—to control employment, provide emergency powers, etc.

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Of special significance was Order 1305 enacted in 1940.

This Order prohibited all strikes unless previously notified to the Minister. It made a 21-day pause compulsory between the decision to strike and its operation. If the dispute was referred to arbitration during this period then strike action was prohibited. The arbitration findings were then binding on all parties.

Despite a firm promise to repeal this draconic measure, it was in fact 1951 before it went, and then only as a direct result of mass action by the Dockers whose rank and file leaders had been arrested and charged at the Old Bailey arising from a strike for higher pay. Each day, under the slogan, "Our men in the Dock—we're out of the Dock" they demonstrated in thousands outside the court. The men were released and Order 1305 replaced by a much milder Arbitration Order (1376) with the right to strike restored.

The Post-War Struggles

From 1951 onwards Monopoly Capital and its right wing supporters has ceaselessly developed and extended its attacks on trade union rights. It must be realised that the present sharp confrontation on the Prices and Incomes Bill—to become even sharper perhaps following the report of the Donovan Commission—is a culminating point of 15 years of ceaseless probing, searching, influencing of public opinion, battles over positions.

The battle has been waged now on a particular case (in which names known previously only to a few have become bywords throughout both sides in the struggle), now around a particular Bill or Act of Parliament, or around evidence submitted to a Royal Commission.

But around these questions the battle for the entire future of Trade Union rights is being fought out, and with it the battle for the future of the Labour Movement.

A year after the historic Dockers' action "Bonsor versus the Musicians Union" established the legal "right" of a member to sue his union official or committee for damages.

In 1964, after several years of legal struggle, the "Rookes versus Barnard" judgement drove a coach and horses through the 1906 Trades Dispute Act.

Much has been written, correctly, about the significance of this case. The outcome, in essence, was that once again the law lords regarded a threat to strike as a threat to do something illegal, i.e., to break a contract. In fact the issue was the right of a union to call an official strike or threaten to call one, to back up its demand for the removal of a non-unionist from a firm where an agreement existed for 100 per cent trade union membership. But Rookes got £4,000 damages and the defendants, union members, were held liable.

While the argument over Rookes v. Barnard still raged and a massive campaign was developing, yet another legal onslaught on the right to strike was mounted in the form of the "Stratford versus Lindley" judgement. Here strike action, or the threat of an embargo on a particular firm which refused normal trade union recognition and agreements, was ruled as illegal, and "intimidation".

From the point of view of the Law, once again the bottom had been knocked out of the right to strike and it is generally agreed that the 1965 Act has not put this right. This has been underlined by clauses in the Contract of Employment Act (1963) which made any strike "in breach of contract" a rupture in continuity of employment with the penalty the loss of rights under the Act to periods of notice, compensation, etc.

Tory Lawyers and Monopoly Aims

It took the Tories over a decade after the war to formulate their longer term aims for trade union legislation. But when these aims appeared they were far reaching and all-embracing, containing within them a programme for the emasculation of the trade union movement to an extent that would transform the unions into useful instruments at the disposal of Monopoly Capitalism.

The first appearance of this programme came in the form of a statement published in 1958 by the Tory Lawyers—the Inns of Court Conservative and Unionist Society—under the title of *A Giant's Strength*. The unions generally, including many left and progressive unions and members, tended seriously to underestimate the importance of this statement which became a blueprint for the concerted drive for anti-union legislation developed since by the employers, right wing, press, television, and the whole ideological apparatus of Monopoly Capitalism.

The Tory Lawyers' aims could be summarised as follows:

Strikes. All "political" strikes were to be made illegal, as was any strike in breach of union rules. No strike could take place before an "independent" tribunal had gone into the facts and then only after 14 days had elapsed since its report. Only registered trade unions were to have the protection of any legal right to strike.

Registration and Rules. The law was to set out obligatory requirements for union rule books, to be observed as a condition for registration with the Registrar of Trade Unions and Friendly Societies. The rules would have to set out who could and could not belong. Every member was to have the right to appeal to an "independent body" (i.e.

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independent of the union) on disciplinary matters. An "objective inquiry" would be obligatory before expulsion. The TUC Bridlington agreement on "poaching" was to have the force of law.

Restrictive Practices. These could be referred to specially set up Industrial Courts. The burden of justification of any particular practice was to be entirely on the workers concerned. A decision against them would have the force of law.

Inter-Union Disputes. All such disputes to be referred by law to the TUC which would be given legal powers to decide who was right and who was wrong.

Trade Union recognition. Trade Union recognition was to be given "when a new union has, for a substantial time, retained a substantial proportion of the workers in a particular grade of industry".

These proposals constituted a clear warning to the Trade Union movement that every basic Trade Union right would have to be fiercely fought for.

The Donovan Commission

The Labour Government elected in October 1964, as one of its first acts, decided to set up a Royal Commission:

> "To consider relations between managements and employees and the role of trade unions and employers' associations in providing the interest of their members and in accelerating the social and economic advance of the nation, with particular reference to the law affecting those bodies; and to report."

The setting up of this Commission, despite the afterthought of including the Employers' Associations, was, in fact, the culminating point of the attacks on the unions of post-war years. The evidence submitted to the Commission by employers' organisations, Government bodies, right wing led unions, shows that the edge is always against trade union action, organisation, militancy, designed to improve wages and conditions at the expense of profits.

The aim is clear—to impose new political and legal restraints on the unions as a counter to the difficulty in imposing new economic restraints in the period of full employment.

A brief summary of some of the pressures already brought to bear on the Commission illuminates the seriousness of the situation which genuine trade unionism has to meet.

The Tories' evidence followed the lines of their Election Manifesto. Collective agreements between employers and unions were to be binding in law, to have the force of business contracts, thus negating both the right to strike (once the agreement had been made) and the right to trade union action in the event of its position strengthening, *vis-à-vis* the employers, or new developments taking place in the period of contract (e.g. cost of living rises; increased profits; new processes of work, etc.).

A "Super Registrar" was to be provided for by law, with wide powers to interfere in Trade Union business, including power to instruct unions to take action if breaches of rules (e.g. unofficial strikes) took place. Only registered trade unions were to have the protection of rights under the Trades Disputes Act, thus making every unofficial striker whether motor worker, docker, or building worker, subject to legal action.

The Engineering Employers Federation's evidence followed along very similar lines except that it spelt out fines against strikers in breach of procedure on the basis of a daily penalty.

The Motor Manufacturers proposed both fines on unofficial strikers and a closed shop as a means of imposing discipline. This latter proposal was echoed both in the evidence submitted by the AEU, and in the reported statement by Ray Gunter, Minister of Labour, in a meeting with representatives of employers and unions in the industry. In brief, the "deal" was a closed shop, with 100 per cent TU membership in the industry, in return for an undertaking that the unions would expel "troublemakers"—and thus expel them not only from the union but from the industry. In the words of the AEU evidence this would "outlaw unofficial strikes for ever".

Sir William Carron, AEU President, has proposed Labour Courts with power to fine trade unionists (or employers) for breaches of procedure—as if any Engineering Employer would want to act in breach of a procedural agreement that gives him everything and the unions next to nothing! Carron also comes out for "legal sanctions" if "unofficial strikes are to be effectively curbed".

Stanley Raymond, speaking for the British Rail Board, proposed to the Commission that fringe benefits such as sick pay, holiday pay, should be withdrawn as a punishment for unofficial strikers on a basis to be determined by industrial courts and that unions should more vigorously discipline members participating in unofficial strikes.

Of especial interest was the evidence submitted by the Ministry of Labour.

Apparently eschewing the more fantastic proposals of the employers and Tories it nevertheless proposed that procedural agreements should be made legally enforceable, thus enabling the unions to act more effectively against unofficial strikes.

In fact this proposal would mean that a wide field of trade union action would be made illegal—the response for example to victimisation, on the multitude of payment by results issues that arise each day in industry after industry, employers' interpretation of agreements, action against non-unionism and so on. Even official action would be subject, in many

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industries, to months of delay while interminable "procedures" were gone through.

Alongside this direct pressure on the Commission has developed a tremendous effort to rouse public opinion against the unions, and especially against trade union strength at job level and above all against strong shop stewards organisation.

The Cowley "noose trial that never was"; Theale; Fords; the Dockers; the workers on the big city building sites; trade unionists at London Airport; oil tanker drivers; any body of trade unionists who use their trade union strength to better their wages or working conditions are "given the treatment", charged with using arbitrary power and lack of concern for wider "national" interests.

Through all these Monopoly and Right-Wing pressures, common themes have clearly emerged.

The aim is to use legislation, a political weapon, to help achieve 5 main aims:

1. To limit and make far more difficult the use of the strike weapon, both official *and* unofficial.
2. To make possible a far greater measure of State interference in, and regulation of, the internal affairs of the unions.
3. To "freeze" the procedural agreements, and to give them the force of law.
4. To confine, at all costs, the power and strength of trade union organisation at job level.
5. To make agreements legally binding, giving them the force of business contracts, with the threat to the unions of legal action in the event of action to improve beyond the agreements;

i.e. added together, to prevent the Giant from using its strength, the far sighted (from their class point of view) aim of the Tory lawyers in 1958.

The Prices and Incomes Bill

It is against this background that the present struggle around the Prices and Incomes Bill needs to be seen.

The Bill, first presented to Parliament in February 1966, and re-presented after the General Election (with some not basic alterations) in July, has its origins in the Incomes Policy of the Labour Government as expressed in the Declaration of Intent of December 1964.

The Declaration, signed by representatives of the Government, the Confederation of British Employers and the Trades Union Congress had as its central aim the restriction of wage and salary increases and improvements in working conditions, to a so-called "norm" of 3 per cent to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum, i.e. within the anticipated increase in national productivity (anticipated at that time—now events have moved on). Price regulation of a limited character was aimed at but not dividends, directors' fees, capital gains or other forms of capitalist accumulation.

The Bill appeared to "put teeth" into the Incomes Policy, after the TUC had agreed to set up its own voluntary claims vetting machinery.

By now the terms and implications of the Bill will be well known and may indeed have been already partly dated by subsequent events and proposals to deal with the new turn in the economic crisis in July, but a short summary will underline the extent to which the Right Wing steadily drives forward anti-union legislation, step by step in line with the wider aims of Monopoly Capitalism's own attack.

First, the Bill gives statutory powers to the Prices and Incomes Board. The Board would have legal powers to require the presence of any witness, and to order any witness to produce documents relevant to the wage claim under discussion. Such powers should not be lightly dismissed for they mean powers of intervention of a permanent, continuous character, in the affairs of unions by an organisation of the State hitherto only given on rare occasions and then by special decision of Parliament.

Secondly the Bill, by its provision for compulsory notification of claims and deferment of settlements, would give the Government power to impose a wage standstill of up to four months, on a particular claim, or, if it so decided, on every claim; and not only on national claims, but district, or sectional, or factory, or even departmental. That practical obstacles would arise for such a sweeping application, should not be allowed to blunt recognition of the new wide powers asked for. Exercised to its full extent, and against the background of annual claims in many industries, it could mean the equivalent of one year's total wage freeze in three.

Thirdly the Bill proposes penal sanctions against Unions, or union members for breaches of the Bill. Fines of up to £500 are provided for. The present state of the law could mean prison sentences for non-payment, and new legal provisions said to be under discussion could mean attachment of wages for non-payment of fines. Such a law could mean, for example, that a trade unionist given the maximum fine for urging action to get a long delayed settlement operated without delay, could have £2 a week "attached" from his wages for five years.

Fourthly, the sharp edge of the Bill is directed always against wages and salaries, despite the inclusion in its title of the word "incomes". Here two major points have to be made. While increases in what the Bill euphemistically calls "Company Distributions" (e.g. Dividends) are subject to compulsory notification to the Minister, there is *no provision of any kind for deferment of payments.* Then, while apologists for the Bill may argue that the requirement to notify dividend increases can bring the pressure of public opinion to bear and in fact bring some restraint on companies increasing

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their dividends, this completely dodges the very fundamental *class* difference between wage restraint and dividend restraint.

This could hardly be better put than it is in a Speakers' Note issued by the National Office of the Communist Party:

> "It is probably hoped by the Government that some people will regard dividends restraint as being the same as wages restraint, when in fact they are two *fundamentally different things*.
>
> "Wage restraint asks the worker to forgo certain wage increases *now*. What they give up now will never be returned to them in any shape or form.
>
> "On the other hand, dividend restraint only *postpones* the rise in dividends. The shareholders will get it back ultimately in one way or another.
>
> "See how this works out. Let us assume that workers who wanted an increase of 6 to 7 per cent are forced by incomes policy to accept 3-3½ per cent. The difference is appropriated by the employers. The workers have made the sacrifice and the matter is finished. There is no guarantee that it will be made up in some future negotiations.
>
> "It is quite different with shareholders. Say a company wished to pay a dividend of 12 per cent to its shareholders and the Prices and Incomes Board asks the company to make it 9 per cent. The money that is 'saved' remains in the company and is available to pay larger dividends in the future.
>
> "Dividend restraint can mean that the company reserves are increased, which in turn may lead to an increase in the value of its shares on the Stock Exchange. Shareholders can then sell them at a higher price than they paid for them and make a capital profit. True this capital profit is now taxed, but the bulk of it remains with the shareholder. In this way dividend restraint can be evaded.
>
> "There is a further way of evasion. As the reserves of the company increase, it may a year later hand out additional new shares to the shareholders for every one they now possess.
>
> "The new dividend per share may appear lower in some cases but as each shareholder has more shares the *total* amount of dividend he receives actually increases.
>
> "So while wages restraint cannot easily be evaded, dividend restraint can."

Prices are included in the legislation—but mainly as a sop to public opinion, and as a means to put across the "hard sell" on wages. Rents, rates, taxes, fares are outside the scope of the Bill; as are all price and charges increases affecting the export trade; as are steel and ship passenger and freight rates.

Window dressing decisions of the Prices and Incomes Board resulting in a short deferment of price increases of bread or marmalade do not disguise the main product and aim of the Bill—wage restraint, interference in internal union affairs, restriction of hard fought for trade union rights to free negotiation, powers to fine, imprison, or to attach wages.

Fifthly, the Bill opens the door to further, and even fiercer, anti-union legislation. Once the Government has committed itself to tread the same road as reactionary governments of the past in attacking trade union rights, where is it to stop? Already, even before the Bill has become an Act (and the growing movement of trade union opposition can still prevent it from so becoming) the economic pressures of the International Bankers, U.S. Monopoly Capital, and the disastrously wrong home and foreign policies pursued by the Government, there is open discussion of an all out, legally imposed, wage freeze, with various periods of duration being suggested. Indeed the Prime Minister, in his notorious "freeze and squeeze" statement of July 20th stated:

> "Nevertheless, in order to ensure that the selfish do not benefit at the expense of those who co-operate, it is our intention to strengthen the provisions of the Prices and Incomes Bill, to speed its passage, and to redefine the role of the National Board for Prices and Incomes, which will not hesitate to act within the powers it enjoys, or may further seek, to deal with any actions involving increases outside and beyond this policy."

By now*, the Government amendments may be known, and may well have included an extension of the periods of compulsory deferment to six months, thus legislating the Government's six months wage freeze policy.

Why the Attacks?

So far-reaching are these new developments for the trade union movement and for the basic interests of the working people of Britain, their families and dependants, that it is not surprising that the movement against the Prices and Incomes Bill and the alarm at further attacks being prepared, has grown to very large proportions.

The national lobbies of March 1st and June 22nd have been widely representative of trade unionists from every part of the country, every industry, and above all the big factories, depots, docks, building sites.

It is necessary therefore at this point to ask: Why the drive against the Unions? Why the Monopoly and Right Wing drive against wages?

In the post-war world the economic policy of British Monopoly Capitalism has had to increasingly try to meet a number of main requirements.

Firstly. To meet the huge and mounting costs of

* On August 10th, the Bill passed its third reading including provisions for imposing complete wage freeze and providing the Government with the legal power to carry through its proposed six-months pay standstill and six-months "severe restraint".

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maintaining armed forces overseas, military expenditure at home, nuclear weapon production and development, foreign bases, in short the total armaments expenditure involved in the maintenance of an Imperialist policy, the tie up with NATO and subordination to the U.S. This now amounts to between a quarter and a third of the total annual Government expenditure.

Secondly. Under conditions of the "wind of change" and the winning of political independence in one after the other of the former British colonies, huge sums are required for neo-colonial investment, i.e. to try to secure, in a different way, the flow of super profit from these countries back to British Monopoly Capital.

Thirdly. To carry through major technological changes in British industry itself, and to try and make up the lag compared with some of its main competitors (West Germany, France, Italy to some extent, Sweden, and of course the U.S.) so as to at least retain its share of world markets, and try to increase that share.

Fourthly. To keep sterling "strong" by achieving a strong balance of payments position despite the huge overseas expenditures on arms and investment.

Fifthly. While meeting each of these four previous requirements—each in itself a major undertaking—to keep the exploiting class in the standard of living "to which it has become accustomed", i.e. ever increasing luxury.

But how is all this to be done? Where is the money to come from? And how and where, under conditions where the uneven development of Capitalism has worked against the interests of British Capitalism?

Faced with the need for a great new accumulation of Capital to finance its overall policy and strategy the ruling class has intensified its efforts to get it from the only source remaining—the surplus value created by the working class.

New Problems for Monopoly Capitalism

The prime purpose of the anti-union legislation; the attempts to turn public opinion against the unions; the bringing in to an increasing extent of the power of the State (law, prisons, fines, etc.); the harnessing of the support of Right Wing Social Democracy, is clear. It is to rapidly and enormously increase the total amount of surplus value, to create this new huge accumulation of capital, in order to carry through a rescue operation for the Capitalist system in Britain, a sick system, a system crying out to the heavens to be replaced.

Such "solutions" to the crisis of British Imperialism are not new. (Even though the present depth and extent of the crisis brings with it a new qualitative change.) A generation ago Tory Prime Minister Baldwin stated "The wages of all workers must come down". A few years later the panacea of class collaboration and class peace was offered through what was known as "Mondism" and Monopoly and the TUC joined hands in the Mond-Turner agreement of 1929 to be followed by mass unemployment, the hunger marches, speed up and intensified exploitation of those at work.

What is new, is that for 20 years, with brief intervals, there has been something like full employment and the ruling class has been denied what was undoubtedly its strongest "regulator"—large scale or mass unemployment to be used to keep wage increases down to a minimum, or to actually reduce wages.

The factors that have caused this unprecedented period of full, or near-full employment, under capitalism require wider treatment than is possible here, but they undoubtedly include the impact of the Socialist World on the ruling class in the capitalist countries (fear of the consequences of mass unemployment); the increased strength and pressure of the working class and in particular of the trade unions; the growth of world trade and demand (including the economic consequences of national liberation); post-war replacement needs; the running down of capital equipment, the stock of dwellings and buildings; and, with a limited effect, the use of monetary policies.

But whatever the factors, labour power for years has been in short supply, and not only in the skilled trades. And labour power in short supply means labour power at a higher price.

But labour power at a higher price is in direct conflict with Monopoly Capitalism's desperate, urgent, demand for a rapid and huge additional accumulation of capital to extract it from crisis.

What to do? For nearly 20 years the debate has been going on in capitalist circles, and in the right wing Labour Leadership which sees the only way forward one in partnership (even if oh so junior partnership!) with big business.

How to counter increased bargaining power by workers arising from increased strength, increased trade union membership, stronger organisation, and the absence of five unemployed men at the gate ready to step into the job of any man inside?

So, in the first post-war Labour Government, the proposition for wage restraint and wage freeze arose, associated with the Chancellorship of Sir Stafford Cripps. But the trade union movement succeeded in a relatively short period of time in breaking down that policy and again pursued the wages struggle.

Then, not unexpectedly, the ruling class used its influence, and its apparatus to get the Right Wing Trade Union leaders to capitulate, and there followed —against the wishes of those trade unionists who

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understood what was happening—harmful national wages and hours agreements. These agreements accepted far smaller settlements than could have been achieved, and many had attached to them "strings", i.e. the surrender by the unions of working conditions, or agreements to new processes, or conditions of work, that in fact meant that higher pay (albeit measly awards) were not coming out of profits, but the workers were paying for them themselves by increased output per man.

But under conditions of full employment the workers themselves began to find an answer to the surrender of their interests in so many national negotiations. The employer needed their labour power in order to make profit. Labour power was in short supply. So in industry after industry workers used their trade union organisation and strength to secure by local agreements, special rates, payment by results, increases over and above (often very substantially) the national rates of pay.

This was the "wage drift" as the economists termed it.

The aim of the Declaration of Intent; the Prices and Incomes Bill; the setting up of the Donovan Commission; the new Judge-made law (Rookes-Barnard; Stratford-Lindley; etc.); the Fleet Street-Portland Place-Lime Grove attacks on the unions; the barrage of spurious, pseudo-Socialist arguments in support of the Incomes Policy; is clear and single minded.

It is to break down Trade Union strength nationally, locally, and at job level, in order to increase exploitation, prevent workers getting even a substantial share of the results of technological development, all this in the sole interests of Monopoly capital. That part of the plan is to bring about a substantial level of unemployment is undeniable.

Defend Trade Union Rights

Against this background the defence of Trade Union rights is not, *in any sense*, an abstract question, just as the attack on them is not abstract. Monopoly has to attack, weaken, do away with, basic trade union rights, because those rights, especially the rights to freely negotiate, to organise, to strike or threaten to strike, to run their own internal affairs; stand in Monopoly's way.

In opposition to Monopoly, the unions have to defend—*and extend*—these rights precisely in order to defend and advance living standards, to combat policies leading to large scale unemployment, and to prevent the advance of Monopoly on the backs of the working people.

This struggle is already taking shape and powerful forces are lining up in defence of Trade Unionism. They include powerful trade unions on record against the Prices and Incomes Bill, with, at the time of writing, the distinct possibility of securing a majority against the Bill at the 1966 Trades Union Congress. It is significant that important non-manual unions have played a leading part as well as some mainly manual unions.

"Hands Off Trade Union Rights" is undoubtedly one of the main slogans under which the struggle will be fought. The defeat of the attempted encroachments on trade union rights is essential for the defence of the immediate and longer term aims of trade unionism. To defeat the Prices and Incomes Bill, to bring the strongest possible pressure to bear to prevent some new, reactionary Trade Union Act arising out of the Report of the Donovan Commission, whenever it comes, to refuse to accept the proposition of the Incomes Policy and step up the struggle for higher wages, shorter hours, better working conditions—all this is indeed of very great importance.

Not only would it defend the immediate interests of the overwhelming majority of the workers and their families, but it would also—to the extent it succeeds—place a very big barrier in the way of the whole strategy of Monopoly Capital in Britain today.

Never has the question of trade union rights been so profoundly political as it is at the present time. Monopoly cannot afford the measure of Trade Union freedom achieved today. Its future requires a drastic limitation of that freedom. Denied such a limitation, the pressure on the whole Monopoly set-up will be greatly increased and the questions of new policies, new leadership, new forms of organisation of the economy and of industry, will arise all the more clearly for discussion and political action.

Extend Trade Union Rights

The more Trade Union rights are *defended* the clearer it becomes that these rights must be *extended.*

As the giant Monopolies become even bigger, exercise even greater power in influencing the lives of the people, so the need becomes clear for the unions to grow, to become more powerful, to protect their members from the increasing arbitrary power of Monopoly.

In doing so, the Unions will not be protecting minority interests. Their gains, in general, tend to apply to non-unionists as well as trade unionists, affect their own families as well as others, and influence the conditions of the elderly and the youth. In this way trade union action defends the interests of the great majority of the people.

What is wrong is not that the unions enjoy too *much* power, but that they have too *little.*

The question is—how is the ability of trade unions to protect their members and working people as a whole, to be extended?

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In its evidence submitted to the Donovan Commission the Communist Party outlined its views and made a number of extremely valuable suggestions and propositions.

Great stress was laid on the need for the unions to be voluntary, democratic, and independent, in order to become stronger and to extend their rights.

Such a conception has no room for proposals such as that which seeks to give power to outside bodies or individuals appointed by the State and responsible to the State, to influence or determine union rules. Such a proposition would mean that under conditions where it is Monopoly Capitalism which wields power within the State, union rules would be determined by the very forces the unions are protecting their members against.

The Communist evidence pointed out that the Right to Strike is a right which is exercised first, and only after a long period of mass struggle is legalised or accepted; and is therefore not a right to be "granted" or "withdrawn" by a union executive. Legislation against "unofficial" strikes would in fact weigh strongly in favour of Monopoly and be harmful to the people's interests. Such legislation would open the way to victimisation, long delays in settling problems, uncontested and unlimited redundancy, long neglect of sections of workers.

Collective bargaining and the right to withdraw labour—*at every level* including the place of work must go together. Without the right to cease work, collective bargaining would become a farce taking place only on the employer's terms.

Similarly, the reactionary demand for Industrial Courts which would be given power to pronounce on "restrictive practices" referred to them by employers or Government, would hand over the workers' right to "protective practice" against speed up, excessive or illegal overtime, accident, danger to health, etc., and replace questions on which negotiations would be valid, to a section of the State apparatus.

Trade Union action to extend union rights is needed on many urgent questions.

On the job, the workers' right of appeal against dismissal is limited or non-existent. Even where it exists the dismissal operates at once and the (often cumbersome and ineffective) appeals procedure operates afterwards. On this basis countless victimisations have taken place.

The right to effective consultation at all levels has still to be won. All too often consultation, wearing the disguise of an apparently democratic face, is used by employers as a means of imposing their will all the more easily. The tendency to set up special committees, councils, etc., for consultation, too often sidesteps the Shop Stewards Committees, which, democratically elected and rooted among the workers, should constitute the only trade union body in the factory in which decisions are taken on *all* major questions.

The right to organise, to recognition, to negotiating rights, remains still to be won in many sections of industry and the professions. Year after year, the Banks and Insurance Companies deny such basic rights to unions, long part of the Trades Union Congress.

The rights of women and young workers are flagrantly denied and constitute one of the greatest violations of democracy in industry today. The right of equal pay, the rate for the job, equal opportunity, access to all trades and professions, adequate training, all have still to be won in the great majority of industries.

Within the unions themselves there is great scope for the extension of democratic rights. Such an extension is essential if the encroachments of Monopoly and the State are to be defeated. Any weakness in union democracy must inevitably open the door to outside dictatorship.

In this field the key needs are: equal rights for all members with no bans, proscriptions, or discrimination: policy to be decided at annual or biennial conferences of elected delegates. An elected National leadership mandated to carry out conference decisions, the periodic election of all full time and lay officers, a strong shop stewards organisation, appeals machinery within the union for the protection of members' rights.

The Need for Fundamental Change

The continuing story over the centuries of the struggle of British working men and women for Trade Union organisation and rights underlines, above all, the need for fundamental social change, if the basic interests of the workers by hand and brain, and of the people as a whole, are to be defended.

The battle for Trade Unionism, for the rights of the unions as democratic organisations which have grown up to defend the interests of workers in capitalist society has had to be fought again and again.

Limitless courage, militancy, sacrifice, perseverance, solidarity, organising detail, have been the hallmarks of the struggle. In each generation advances have been won, usually prised out of the grip of an unwilling, reactionary, ruling class, concerned first and last with defending its own narrow interests.

But no sooner has an advance been made, new rights secured, than that same class has been prepared to use its dominance of the State to try to once more restore the old order, take away the hard-won rights, and impose new measures to weaken the unions and strengthen its grip.

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True, in Britain, solid worth-while gains have been made by the unions in the degree of trade union organisation; in the right to organise; to take part in the political struggle; to determine to some extent through negotiation and activity the level of wages and working conditions; to influence industrial and Government policy. Trade Unionism has indeed become a recognised, powerful force in British society and political life. If testimony were needed to this, it surely is in the very breadth of the new attacks being made upon it and the ferocity of those attacks whenever any significant body of trade unionism makes a serious challenge to Monopoly interests.

The battle to defend what has been won, and to make fresh gains is of great importance. But that struggle can only fully succeed under conditions of a basic transformation of society.

Monopoly Capital did not hesitate, given the opportunity, to use the State form of Fascism to trample on the trade union achievements of the German, Italian, Spanish and Austrian workers.

In Britain, the division of the national wealth between the classes has not been radically changed—Trade Union struggle has been necessary only to maintain that division! Capitalist society, concentrating wealth, power, and control, in the hands of the few, cannot guarantee full employment, rising living standards, nor meet the social needs of the people. Trade Unionism, under capitalism, cannot make its enormous potential contribution to the running of industry.

Only with Monopoly's grip broken, the great industries and national resources publicly owned and controlled and comprehensively planned, the only purpose of industry to serve the people, would the trade unions come into their own and fulfil their destiny, playing a role far greater then they do today.

One of the greatest crimes of Right Wing Social Democracy is the disrepute it has succeeded in attaching to the idea of public ownership and control in the minds of large numbers of trade unionists and working people, through its distortion of nationalisation to serve the aims of Monopoly. To wipe out that disrepute is part of the battle for Trade Unionism's future.

We are probably in the early stage of a new phase of trade union development, a phase likely to be marked by intense struggle drawing in millions of workers; by united mass action; by the possibility of big advances in organisation and unity; by a new line-up of forces in which past labels need not necessarily apply.

The defence of hard-won trade union rights; the struggle to extend those rights; fierce resistance to Monopoly encroachments; increased Trade Union understanding of and action for Socialist change—these are the issues around which the next chapters in Trade Union history will be made and written.

Town Planning Problems

W. H. Evans

(This article is based on a talk given in the Week of Marxist Discussion organised by the Cultural Committee at the beginning of this year)

THE siting, form and the size of towns have been conditioned throughout history by the technical level of the society which created them. The earliest cities, for instance, were sited in the fertile river valleys where food could be grown in sufficient quantities to provide a surplus, and where it could easily be concentrated. To exploit the river as a traffic artery, cities were downstream from the main food-growing areas and never extended far from the river bank. In size, they were unable to outstrip the locally-grown food supply.

Later, navigation and sea-going trade led to the development of ports. The growth of overland communications and inland trade led to the choice of the river crossing. Warfare—a most potent promoter of technical progress—had, especially in the late Middle Ages, an equally potent influence on the shape, size, growth and siting of towns.

The early towns and villages of the industrial age were tied to the mill-streams. Later, with the development of steam power, they were tied to the coalfields. The concentration of large numbers of workers for factory production led, in the absence of efficient transport, to the densely packed towns of the industrial revolution. Later still, the development of the tram and the bus caused suburban growth in

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ribbons along radiating main roads, which in turn led to the coalescence of settlements—what, in town planning jargon, is called the "conurbation". The city, in short, by definition a unique product of civilisation, in every way mirrors the technical level of the civilisation which created it.

Political Solution Needed

But as Marxists we know that the technical level of society is not the only thing that matters. Modern technology, indeed, offers us almost unlimited possibilities. There is little or nothing we would wish to ask for that we could not achieve. We need more room? Then let us win it from the sea. We press hard on our food production? We could double or treble it within a decade. Building is too slow? We could revolutionise building in a year or two. Put a town under one roof? We could do it. Put a suburb inside one building? It has already been done. Do away with the town altogether? Nothing to prevent it, if that is what we want. The techniques are known. The scientists and technicians are biting their fingernails in frustration. Only an outmoded social system stands in the way. It is primarily a political and not a technical solution which is needed.

As Marxists we know that the required social change is a revolutionary one. But there are pressing problems now that certainly cannot wait on a revolution; problems for which people are now demanding a solution, and for which a partial answer can be given within the context of capitalism. Problems which previously revolutionaries might have left to a long-term programme, are now of immediate tactical significance.

I want to touch on the two which are the most obvious in town planning—housing and traffic. I shall say nothing of the broader economic questions of rents, subsidies, land-ownership, etc. I shall confine myself to what may be considered the narrower technical issues. Neither do I propose to advance solutions to every problem. The right way of tackling most of them is disputed even in professional circles. My hope is to provoke a political discussion, without which solutions will not be found.

The Housing Problem

To deal first with housing. There is certainly an enormous demand, although there is some debate about the size of it. The principal components at any rate are clear. We need to house a growing population, and we need to replace an outworn stock of slums and sub-standard dwellings. In the one case the problem is aggravated by the smaller average family. In the other by a population shift to those areas of the country which currently are prospering. So great is the demand that it is clear that while traditional and every other known method of building must be used, in the long run we must create a rational industrialised building industry. This of course raises many problems for the workers involved—professionals as well as craftsmen. Linked with these are questions of popular control in what could become an even more profitable business.

Rationalised building also implies standardisation. Standardisation of components, of assemblies, of whole buildings—possibly, even, of groups of buildings. Standardisation of course has already entered other highly-organised industries. The motor and electronic industries are examples. Indeed, even without the efficiency which organisation can bring, the building industry has imposed a common stamp on square miles of urban development. Witness the "bye-law" terraces of the 19th century; today's spec-built suburbs and most municipal housing estates. But there is nothing intrinsically wrong with standardisation, provided the standards are right. Standards of space, of heating, of equipment; standards of environment and siting. We can have the right standards—and at the right price—if we are sufficiently determined politically.

Environment and Siting

This matter of environment and siting is important. Apart from practical matters like proximity to work, to shops and to schools, there is a world of difference between the same houses in dissimilar surroundings. And it is not all a matter of snobbery. No-one (or hardly anyone) wants to gaze into his neighbour's windows a few feet across the street. Nor on to a wilderness of windswept mud. This question always brings up (in planners' jargon) the word "density". How many people (or rooms, or dwellings) to the acre? Here two things need to be said.

Large numbers can live in compact communities without most of them (or even any of them) living in flats. Some may, of course, prefer to live in flats. Especially if they are built to exploit their unique advantages. On the other hand a town can encroach into the countryside—even into beautiful countryside—without necessarily bringing blight and destruction. There is nothing intrinsically ugly about a town. Indeed it is an eloquent comment upon industrial capitalism that two centuries or so ago, towns were thought of as beautiful, and the countryside as "rude", with little to commend it.

How we should set about new development will depend upon many things and not least upon local peculiarities. There is certainly no easy uniform solution, and I shall not propose one here.

But another significant problem now enters. What are we to do with the existing stock of housing in our towns? Much of it is substandard, much out-of-date. Previously, the working-class movement has stood uncompromisingly for demolition and replace-

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ment. Any short-term schemes for "improvement" have been viewed with distrust as an attempt to perpetuate evil. But the delay in dealing with this problem is now so long drawn out that it is clear that large numbers of these houses will have to be made fit to serve at least one more generation.

Also, no matter how fast redevelopment proceeds, acres of housing which mushroomed in the mid-nineteenth century will take decades to replace. Now, we should be very careful here. We need to defend the idea of "comprehensive redevelopment" of large areas under the control of local authorities. But on the other hand we must oppose the current tendency for large-scale clearance, or wholesale demolition, which tears great gaps in the hearts of our cities and leaves derelict and unusable large areas for years on end. We should instead press for selective demolition (under a comprehensive plan) of outworn terraces, and for the selective short-term re-equipment of others. This could do much to up-grade a poor environment. Open space and playgrounds could be provided, while new development is taking place. In this way an area could continue to live while being reborn.

This then is one practicable policy we could fight for. But where wholesale destruction has already taken place, and sites are to lie derelict for years before building starts, could we not urge that they should be prepared for use as temporary playgrounds or parks. Or—where the provision is sub-standard—as sites for temporary clinics, libraries and so on? Could we not even, if no-one else is willing, organise the local youngsters and make a start?

Problems of Traffic

So much then for housing. Now to look at the problems of traffic—surely the most obvious symptom of the conflict between technical progress and social stagnation in town planning. If for no other reason, surely future generations will think us mad to have tolerated for so long such intolerable conditions. In these circumstances it is understandable that road traffic is the most commonly debated problem today when town planning is mentioned. Like much which is the subject of popular discussion, argument is often based upon misconceptions. I propose to deal with some of these before proceeding further.

The first commonly-held notion concerns by-passes: "All would be well in our towns if the traffic congesting them were by-passed round the outside." Unfortunately, however, the larger the town the less effective the by-pass. Traffic in cities is for the most part generated within them and this is not by-passable.

The second misconception is that all our troubles are due to the motor-vehicle. How wide of the mark this is will be known to those whose memory of London goes back to the turn of the century, when the chaos from horse-drawn traffic was at its peak. Urban traffic is caused by the need to move people and goods in a complex urban society. A compact vehicle, easily-manoeuvrable and able to be moved at will almost anywhere within the town is at the moment indispensable.

The third notion is that all would be well if we let buses cope. We shall say more about public transport shortly, but towns have now grown in such a way that without great inconvenience it is doubtful if one bus would replace thirty or so motor-cars as easily as is sometimes supposed. Small buses may be useful. But if we go too far in that direction we're back where we started with thousands of small vehicles. And surely we should think twice before urging that just when the working man has achieved for himself and his family the luxury of a motor-car, we should be told to herd ourselves back once more on to the smoke-filled upper deck where (in many towns) we are still exhorted not to spit upon the floor.

Many other over-simplified notions abound. Smaller cars. But the size of the car has unfortunately only a marginal effect on the road space required when moving. More people per car. Fine—but how do you organise it? Stagger working hours. Fine again—but how do you fit that into a campaign for shorter hours and more pay?

And yet an answer must be found. In the hope that they might come up with one, the Ministry of Transport over two years ago commissioned a team of experts to look at the problem. They did, and they produced the much-discussed *Buchanan Report*. They came to some conclusions—most of them sufficiently uncomfortable for a Tory Government to leave it gathering dust on the shelf where it still lies. But it did not pretend to produce any definite answers, beyond the generalisation that you can have lots of cars in towns if you can have lots of new roads. If you want new roads (and they will have to be big roads—motorways) you will have to decide whether the town can take them without being destroyed in the process by their size and noisiness. If you decide the town can be remodelled to take them, then they will have to be paid for—in the thousands of millions. If you decide the town cannot take them, or if you cannot pay for them, you will have, in one way or another, to keep the number of vehicles down to tolerable levels.

There are lessons for us here, but before discussing them it will be useful to note one conclusion the Buchanan Report did reach which has far reaching implications. They looked at existing towns of all sorts and sizes, and at the end concluded "*it is impossible except in the smaller towns* (and here they

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probably were thinking of 30,000 or so population) *to provide for all movement to be made in individual motor vehicles*".

The inference surely is clear. Either we abandon our large cities or we look for alternatives to today's "individual motor vehicle". For some time and for most of us at least, there is no likelihood of the former—even if it were desirable. The latter therefore is our only course. This will require fundamental research into essentials involving the layout of towns, patterns of movement, mechanisms and control systems.

Short-Term Policies

This, even if we were pressing on with the job—which we're not—would take time. We must therefore have policies which can be operated in the short term.

What should these policies be? In my opinion they should be based upon the Buchanan Report's recommendation to keep the numbers of vehicles in towns down to tolerable levels. What this will mean in each locality will have to take account of local conditions, but much guidance can be found in the Buchanan Report—especially in its suggestions concerning the measurement of what is tolerable. I'd like to suggest five points which I think should be borne in mind as a basis for detailed elaboration in the light of local conditions.

1. *Traffic a Service.* Any town planning scheme where traffic is an issue should start from this premise. Traffic is a service to the town and the people in it. They should not be sacrificed to any narrow technical expedient intended to keep traffic on the move.

2. *Priority for Pedestrians.* Pedestrians—especially the old and the young—should have priority. They cannot get around in motor cars and are the most vulnerable. They should not be subjected to the treatment beloved of traffic engineers: "canalisation". They should not be crammed on to narrower pavements, led up and down stairways, through subways and over bridges except in very rare instances. The vehicle, not the pedestrian, should make the detour where one is necessary to avoid a conflict.

3. *No Severance by Traffic.* Heavy main road traffic severs one side of a road from the other as drastically and as dangerously as does a river in flood. Most main roads in cities form the core of the shopping and social centres which have developed along them. The present cheese-paring policies encourage the "improvement" of these main roads to take still more fast-moving traffic. Present arrangements for Treasury finance even encourage this policy which is fundamentally wrong. Because in this way localities are cut in half. Homes are severed from shops, schools and other facilities. The High Street must not be turned into the M1.

4. *Environmental Management.* Anyone wanting to make sound practical suggestions for improving his locality should read the section in the Buchanan Report dealing with "Environmental Management". There he will find illustrations of how to start immediately on improving conditions. By creating "pedestrian only" streets. By discouraging "through" traffic, and the like. The Report also suggests that the present practice of re-routing traffic through residential streets should be made subject to planning legislation and public enquiry. We should support this. In some cases also, in place of the "pedestrian only" street (which might not be immediately realistic) we should press for vehicles to be excluded during certain hours when pedestrian activity is high. This especially might apply in shopping centres.

5. *Public Transport.* This we must have. It must be improved, made more attractive and efficient. I think we should stop equivocating here and give a lead. Let's have *free* public transport in towns as a municipal service. Certainly a good case could be made that this would be a much cheaper solution than all the motorways, car parks and flyovers, and all the acres of room private motoring would require. But we must beware of minimising the difficulty. Once possessed of a motor car it is doubtful if most city dwellers will be dissuaded from using it unless an alternative is made equally attractive. Without other improvements it is doubtful if even making public transport free will achieve the desired result. Some form of rationing of freedom to motor in city centres now seems probable, and we should be on guard to see that this is by need and not by depth of pocket.

Long-Term

In the long-term, what should we be advocating? What we need clearly is some alternative to the privately-owned and individually-operated motor car, retaining its advantages while avoiding the trouble it is now causing. Here we go back to our technologists and ask them to supply the right answers. The trouble at the moment is that they are not being asked the right questions. Sound town planning starts by asking the right questions. What sort of towns do we want? Where should they be? How big? How should they be arranged? What's the best sort of town to promote a happy, healthy life?

Questions like these will not be asked or answered by experts alone. They require the enthusiastic determination of people—especially those who are most deprived—to rescue town planning from the hands of those too narrowly concerned with finding the cheapest technical answer to what is certainly much more than merely a technical matter.

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Rosa Luxemburg

Ernst Wangermann

IN the present period of renewed interest in Marxism, a new biography of Rosa Luxemburg, the Polish-born revolutionary, Marxist, and co-founder of the German Communist Party, was to be expected. It is a cause for satisfaction that the task has been undertaken by a historian who was able to study the Polish and Russian as well as the German material, has a sympathetic understanding for the ideals and personality of his subject, and, though not in any strict sense a Marxist, is not concerned to score points against Marxism.

Somewhere in his book[1] J. P. Nettl refers to the period of the Second International, which coincides with the active life of Rosa Luxemburg, as the Old Testament period of Communism. Despite the religious connotation, it is an apt formulation. Many of the attitudes prevalent in the contemporary Communist parties have their roots in this period. Most problems facing socialists today were debated in one form or another in the parties of the Second International, often on a very high level of integrity and theoretical perception. The terrible collapse of the International on the outbreak of war in 1914 and the failure of socialist revolution in Germany in 1918 produced powerful emotional reactions, which for many years thereafter stood in the way of a rational evaluation of socialist success and failure. Nettl's Luxemburg biography provides an opportunity to bring fresh thought to bear on old and accepted attitudes, and to assimilate a vast quantity of new material on the history of Marxism.

I

Like most revolutionaries among the Tsar's subjects, Rosa Luxemburg was forced into exile quite early in her life. She studied economics in Zurich and gained a doctor's degree with a work of original research on the industrial development of Poland. Finding Polish exile politics alone too narrow a field for her revolutionary energies, she secured German nationality in order to take part in the activities of the biggest, best organised, and at that time most promising party of the Second International—the German Social Democratic Party (SPD).

She entered the ranks of the SPD just before the end of the 19th century, when the first major debate on revolutionary prospects and tactics was taking place within organised Marxism, a debate to which she made one of the most significant contributions.

The controversy over the original version of "Revisionism" is well worth a thorough reappraisal. Nettl's chapter on it, entitled "Defending the Fortress", represents a considerable advance on other recent studies of which I have knowledge. The difficulty of Bernstein and the Revisionists was one which is familiar to socialists today, and one is astonished how many of the current controversies Bernstein anticipated. Economic statistics, practical experience and discussions with English Fabians convinced him that the expectations derived by his fellow socialists from their knowledge of Marxist economics were largely false: small-scale enterprise was surviving, significant sections of the working class were less impoverished than before, and capitalism was organising and stabilising itself to some extent.

Two factors made objective, cool discussion of these points difficult for Marxists: (1) there was an emotional reaction against questioning any of Marx's findings and anticipations, and (2) both "Revisionists" and "Orthodox" Marxists agreed that if Bernstein's analysis were right, there was little prospect of a revolutionary situation in which the working class could seize political power and build socialism. Both assumed that some kind of "collapse" of capitalism was a prerequisite of the social revolution. This was fatal to the discussion of the points raised by Bernstein, for interpretation of economic statistics became the acid test of revolutionary faith. Even Rosa Luxemburg was unable to transcend this arid "either, or":

> Either revisionism is correct in its position on the course of capitalist development, and therefore the socialist transformation of society is only a utopia, or socialism is not a utopia, and the theory of "means of adaptation" is false.[2]

It is one of the virtues of Nettl's study of this controversy that he identifies and criticises the passages in Rosa Luxemburg's argument which amounted to little more than "Talmudic subtleties" and the reassertion of hallowed but sterile attitudes. The "Revolution" here debated was not a concrete historical event, but a theoretical postulate.

Rosa Luxemburg was on firmer ground when

[1] Rosa Luxemburg, 2 vols., Oxford University Press, £6 6s.

[2] Social Reform or Revolution, quoted in C. Wright Mills, The Marxists, p. 192.

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dealing with the Revisionists' consolation that socialism would be the automatic end-product of a series of democratic and social reforms. Her analysis of the dialectical relationship between day-to-day reforms and revolution is probably the best existing statement of the problem and would be well worth republishing. But it had one important negative consequence which is symptomatic of an inherent difficulty in the relationship between trade unions and socialist parties. Rosa Luxemburg's demonstration of the limits of what trade union struggles could achieve within a framework of capitalism—comparing them to the labours of Sisyphus, which was admittedly an underestimate—was at the root of an ever widening gulf between the left-wing of the SPD and the majority of the trade union leadership.

Officially, Revisionism was condemned in full congress both of the SPD and the Second International; but it was condemned, not in the name of genuine revolutionary Marxism, but of sterile orthodox attitudes which entailed revolutionary postulates.

II

Rosa Luxemburg was among the first to realise what a hollow victory she had herself helped to achieve. In a letter, written towards the end of 1904, she wrote:

> I am not in the least happy about the role which the so-called orthodox "radicals" have played up to now. Chasing after each opportunistic hare, and yacking critical advice doesn't satisfy me; in fact, I am so sick and tired of this sort of activity that I would really rather keep quiet in such cases. I envy the certainty with which some of our radical friends merely find it necessary to lead back the strayed lamb—the party—into the safe domestic fold of the old principles and don't realise that in this wholly negative manner we don't move forward one single step. And for a revolutionary movement not to move forward is—to go back.

To overcome the sterile concentration on revolutionary phraseology, Rosa Luxemburg wanted to enlarge the range of activity, to find new forms of political action which might open up the approaches towards a revolutionary transformation of society. The experience of political struggles in Belgium, and above all the Russian revolution of 1905, made her the advocate of the political mass strike as an effective form of action. Doctrinaire Marxists tended to reject it out of hand as an anarchist "panacea", but it is significant that the most formidable opposition came from the trade union leaders, reluctant to risk their organisations and funds. The debate on the political mass strike widened the gulf between the trade union leadership and the left-wing of the SPD, which had first appeared in the course of the Revisionist controversy. On the trade union side emerged that anti-intellectualism which has always been prominent in British trade unionism and of which Ernest Bevin was the outstanding representative. A mason at the 1905 party congress expressed the view that the political mass strike was an over-subtle idea, which only an intellectual who had never gone hungry, could have thought up.

In the period 1905 to 1913 the discussions on the political mass strike helped to reveal the fundamentally right-wing attitudes of the "orthodox" leaders like Bebel and Kautsky. Bebel insisted that the mass strike could only be a defensive weapon against an anti-democratic *coup d'état*, and he won over the trade union opposition on this basis. And in 1910, when Rosa Luxemburg wanted to develop and widen the powerful movement for a more democratic franchise in Prussia, her former ally Kautsky deserted her, condemning anything more than an electoral campaign as adventurist under the circumstances. By 1910-1911, practically the entire SPD and trade union leadership was committed to exclusively parliamentary forms of political struggle and to waiting for economic crisis and political disintegration in the existing order to provide the occasion for more revolutionary tactics.

How do we explain this kind of political development? What is the historical basis for "right-wing leadership" in mass parties with revolutionary programmes? Lenin's theory of the corruption of the labour aristocracy with the super-profits of imperialism, now seems inadequate. Apart from the doctrinaire "abstentionism" of the anti-Revisionists, Nettl has or implies two explanations. One. he suggests, stems from the character of the SPD organisation, which was not so much an instrument for effecting the transformation of society, but rather an alternative society for those who were under-privileged and alienated in the Germany of William II. The leaders had found a home which satisfied them, and in which they were prepared to wait for their due inheritance when the great collapse took place. From such a position, one could maintain purity of principle, but one could hardly conduct effective revolutionary action. Like the trade union leaders, the leaders of the SPD felt that there was too much to lose, should the struggle not be immediately successful. Like the trade union leaders, they did not consider the possibility—repeatedly stressed by Rosa Luxemburg—that for a revolutionary movement standing still was tantamount to decline. Nettl's second explanation is little more than an untested assertion. He outlines a kind of "sociology of bureaucracy", implying that bureaucrats and managers will always be "efficient, down-to-earth and completely unrevolutionary". On this view, the growth of the party machine in the

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years 1900 to 1914 would in itself account for right-wing domination. Nettl may be right in criticising Communists for their neglect of the problem of party and state bureaucracies. However, it seems to me that his Luxemburg biography still leaves the problem of the "triumph of opportunism" in the SPD without a completely satisfactory historical solution.

In her almost complete isolation, Rosa Luxemburg developed her ideas in a way which was consciously or unconsciously designed to provide theoretical justification for building up a left-wing opposition to the SPD leadership. Her theory of imperialism, elaborated during this last period before World War I, was not (as is still occasionally alleged) a mathematical calculation to prove the more or less imminent inevitable collapse of the capitalist economy. It was a demonstration of the necessity of continuous active confrontation of the political order by the organised working class. Imperialism, precisely because of the prospect of collapse, was capitalism on the warpath. In this situation, a policy of wait-and-see, of passive defence of past achievements, could only spell defeat for the revolutionary movement.

At the same time, Rosa Luxemburg elaborated a concept of "the masses" as naturally left-wing, active and revolutionary. She refused to accept the argument that the current passivity of the masses restricted the party to exclusively parliamentary tactics. The problem here raised has remained ever since at the centre of socialist controversy. Nettl's discussion of it is therefore both important and topical. Marxists should note particularly his suggestion that those of Rosa Luxemburg's formulations which later provided the basis for the charge of a false revolutionary "theory of spontaneity" provided at the time a basis for appealing to the party rank and file against a passive and opportunist leadership. It was Rosa Luxemburg's almost single-handed campaign, first against the stagnation of 1910 to 1914, and after the outbreak of war against the leadership's nationalist and "patriotic" line, which laid the historical foundations of the German Communist Party (KPD).

III

During the first war years, the left-wing "Spartacist" opposition in Germany worked out a policy which came very close to that of Lenin and the Bolsheviki. This is not surprising when it is recalled that this policy was first elaborated in principle by Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin jointly at the 1907 Stuttgart congress of the Second International.

The dishonest attempt of the "social patriots" to justify their political cowardice in Marxist terms, and the moral revulsion felt by the anti-war left-wing against the fantastic slaughter on the battle-fields, produced a marked aggravation in the terminology of socialist controversy, which outlived the war and was later to do much to impede the fight against Nazism and to diminish the popular appeal of socialism. Nevertheless, Rosa Luxemburg and the Spartacists refrained at this stage from a formal organisational split. They wanted to enhance their political influence over the SPD rank and file by staying within the main party organisation. They gave expression, first to the revulsion against the leaders' *volte-face* of August 1914, and then to the growing disillusion with the war which by 1915 could be seen to be both aggressive and unsuccessful. In 1916 the first overt anti-war demonstrations took place, and the most prominent Spartacist leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, were imprisoned.

Nettl notes, but does not attempt to explain, the failure of *Spartakus* to make a significant political impact as a group. Not until the early part of 1917 are there any indications that the growing anti-war sentiment would soon drive the masses behind *Spartakus* and the now almost legendary prisoner Karl Liebknecht. Later that year, the "Centrists", led by Haase, Ledebour and Kautsky, who had voted against war-credits since 1915 but declined to call for a revolutionary struggle to end the war, seceded from the SPD to form an independent party, the USPD. The new party quickly attracted 170,000 members. Could *Spartakus* have won and organised this anti-war section, if it had set itself up as a separate party in 1914? With a more powerful *Spartakus*, calling for revolutionary struggle, would the outbreak of revolution in Germany have occurred earlier than November 1918?

As it was, the Russian Revolution broke out much earlier, and after November 1917 the Bolsheviki, having seized political power, were compelled to accept the dismemberment of Russia by German imperialism at Brest-Litovsk, in order to survive in Petrograd and Moscow. It was difficult for German revolutionaries to accept the Bolshevik submission to German imperialism. Rosa Luxemburg's pamphlet on the Russian Revolution, almost the only one of her writings now generally known in the West, was the product of her doubts about Brest-Litovsk and of her fears about its consequences.

Rosa Luxemburg achnowledged that the actions of Lenin and the Bolsheviki during 1917 were a practical application of her own theories concerning political action as the key to mass support and mass action as the approach to revolution. But she overestimated the popular support for the Bol-

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sheviki, and did not understand Lenin's policy of using state power to gain that additional popular support (i.e., that of the peasantry) without which the state power just won would soon be lost again. The price of peasant support was the "non-socialist" land policy which she criticised. Quite correctly she realised that dictatorship was not a satisfactory substitute for active popular support. The pamphlet shows how quickly and deeply Rosa Luxemburg became aware of the problems facing socialists as a result of the historical fact that the first socialist revolution had to compromise with a backward peasantry and a victorious German imperialism. Nettl's analysis of the pamphlet is masterly and profound. He advises "those who are made joyful by criticism of the fundamentals of the Bolshevik revolution" to "turn elsewhere" for political comfort.

IV

Unfortunately Nettl is not equally good on all aspects of the Luxemburg-Lenin controversies. Though there are many references to the question of national self-determination, the Leninist position does not emerge very clearly. On the question of Lenin's attitude to party doctrine and organisation, I consider this book to be misleading. The statement that Lenin would have written exactly as he did about party organisation had he lived on the moon, seems absurd and contradicts the growing consensus among Marxists that his ideas were expounded with specific reference to conditions in Tsarist Russia. Elsewhere Nettl obscures Lenin's attitude by failing to distinguish between class consciousness and socialist consciousness. He also seems to me to overestimate the significance of Lenin's pre-1914 admiration of Kautsky. It is true that both men concentrated on elaborating theory and doctrine. But Kautsky's aim was to justify political inaction, while Lenin tried to lay the theoretical foundation for effective political action in Russian society—far away and exiled though he was. Any theoretical justification for doing nothing just now was to Lenin *a priori* absurd. He did not know enough about the German situation to realise to what use Kautsky's formulations were being put. I suppose his pre-occupation with Kautsky after 1914, which puzzles Nettl, may have been due to the desire to prevent others being taken in as he had been.

However, there should be little disagreement with Nettl in rejecting the allegation of a system of inter-connected theoretical errors called "Luxemburgism". Rosa Luxemburg's murder by right-wing military thugs with the connivance of ministers who had been her party colleagues, is a tragedy unique in the annals of the socialist movement. But it almost pales beside the tragedy which occurred after her death, when her historical role and her writings became an issue in the faction fights which divided the Soviet and German Communist parties. It is incredible that political discussion, claiming to be illuminated by Marxism, should have declined to the arid and dishonest level revealed in the last chapter of this work. "Luxemburgism" in the twenties became a weapon and a myth in a struggle with which Rosa Luxemburg's ideas had very little connection. It is remarkable that Marxism has been able to survive such parody.

Having discarded the notion of Luxemburgism, readers should take advantage of this well-written and sympathetic biography to study the life and ideas of Rosa Luxemburg who combined in her person very high intelligence, an indomitable revolutionary temperament and a fascinating and deeply humane character.

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Discussion Contributions on:

The Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism

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ONE of the fundamental requirements for dialogue of any kind is the existence of a common language. (It is true that in practice, the presence of an interpreter can provide, as it were, the common ground on which the conversation is based; but there must be some such common ground.) Until a few years ago it was almost axiomatic amongst Roman Catholics that no such common ground with Marxism existed—that dialogue was, therefore, impossible. And so the two camps—the Roman Catholic camp and the Marxist camp—took up positions of mutual exclusiveness and hostility.

But ever since Pope John XXIII issued his Encyclical on World Peace, the situation has altered profoundly. Not only does he refer to a passage in a previous Encyclical in which he calls on Catholics "to work loyally in the pursuit of objectives which are of their nature good or conducive to good", but he goes on to insist on the importance of treating those with whom we may disagree on certain important points, as human beings:

> The person who errs is always and above all, a human being, and he retains in every case his dignity as a human person; and he must be always regarded and treated in accordance with that high dignity. Besides in every human being there is an innate and inextinguishable need which drives him to pierce through the web of error and open his mind to the knowledge of truth . . . Meetings . . . between believers and those who do not believe or believe insufficiently . . . can be occasions for discovering truth and paying homage to it.

Nor should we infer from this passage that the Pope is thinking in terms of bringing the other side to appreciate the truth as we see it. He was, as we know, convinced of the value of dialogue as a way of leading *both* participants to a deeper understanding of the truth.

Common Ground

When we ask ourselves what is the common ground between the Catholic and the Marxist, the answer surely is "a common concern for human well-being". But this not only provides a common ground; it also explains why in the past there has been such a great divide between the two camps. For we have to admit that in the past, Catholics, along with other Christians, have failed to appreciate adequately the relevance of their religion to human well-being. All too often, through an exaggerated emphasis on the "other-worldliness" of the Christian religion, its followers have failed to recognise clearly the emphatic insistence by Christ Himself on the obligation we are all under to come to the help of our fellow man in all his needs.

It has to be admitted, too, that this failure on the part of too many Christians, coupled with the perennial effects of human selfishness, resulted in a situation in the so-called Christian countries of Europe which laid the way open for the success of the Marxist gospel. It is perfectly understandable that Marx and his followers down to the present day should have held religion itself responsible for the failures of its adherents. Moreover, the very fervour with which Marxists have mounted their attack on the social injustices which ensued from the failure of Christians to live up to their beliefs, has had the salutary effect of making Christians more fully conscious of their obligations in the ordinary field of economic and industrial relations. For this, we can express a genuine gratitude to those who have taught us such a lesson.

If we have dwelt on the failures of Christians in the past, it is because an appreciation of such failures may help us to a fuller understanding of the demands of the Christian Faith. For whilst it is true that the Christian is committed to a belief in the transcendent qualities of human nature, whilst indeed he knows that "not by bread alone does Man live", he is, nevertheless, equally committed to the belief that Man's conduct on earth, his behaviour towards his fellow men, is of a cardinal importance in the judgement which will be passed on him.

This is hardly the place for a theological lecture,

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but no genuine understanding of Christianity is possible without a recognition that, in the doctrine of the Incarnation we are assured that all Man's concerns including his bodily needs are of importance to God Himself.

Whilst, therefore, so long as Marxism includes in its programme the attack on organised religion, there can clearly be no lasting agreement between the two systems, it is not merely possible, it is absolutely necessary for the achievement of their common objectives that they should arrive at a *modus vivendi*. It is gratifying to know that the change of climate initiated by John XXIII has already had practical results in semi-official meetings between Marxists and Christians to discuss common philosophical and sociological preoccupations. What is surely of more importance is that both sides should come together to collaborate in the practical work of solving the urgent problems of peace, disarmament and the alleviation of world hunger. But such common effort will be possible only if there is mutual understanding and mutual trust. We Christians must be prepared to recognise the honesty of purpose which inspires many of the followers of Marx and to see how much, on the purely practical level, we can share in their activities.

Differences

At the same time, of course, it would not be honest to fail to recognise the deep differences that separate us. So long as Marxism holds that the full meaning of Man's existence is to be found within temporal history, it is obvious that Christians must believe that it lacks the most important dimension in its thinking about human nature. Moreover, the Christian cannot but feel that a system which recognises no moral absolutes will be inclined to adopt methods for the achievement of its political ends which the Christian cannot approve.

It will, of course, be easy for the Marxist to retort that the Christian, whilst he professes certain moral absolutes, does at times behave in ways which belie these professions. This we Christians must recognise to be a valid criticism, and one which will perhaps encourage us to live up to our professions more completely. Certainly, there is much to be done by both of us in collaborating for the solution of the world's problems. All men today, whatever their nationality, their ideology or their religion live under a common terror—the threat of thermo-nuclear annihilation. Equally, they all live under a common hope—the hope that the scientific and technological developments of recent years will be applied not to destructive, but to constructive purposes. Not until the nations of the world have learnt to live together in something approaching mutual trust, can they hope to work together for their common purposes, and it would seem that the Christian vision of mankind as a true fraternity, a genuine family under a common Father is surely a more enduring basis on which to build a world society. Yet this vision will be a mere mirage unless it is translated into effective action at the practical level of economics, politics, culture and the like. It is at this practical level that we can all meet.

Basis for Dialogue

Yet such meeting at the practical level will not endure unless there is a true meeting of minds. It is surely not illusory to think that when men of intelligence, practical sense and genuine conviction about the value of their work come together in sincerity of purpose, this in itself will lead to a growth of mutual understanding and respect.

As an indication of the way in which recent thinking in the Catholic Church provides a genuine basis for dialogue with Marxism, the following quotations from John XXIII's Encyclical on World Peace are highly relevant. Speaking of the characteristics of the present day he says:

> The working classes have gradually gained ground both economically and socially. They began by claiming their rights chiefly at the economic and social level; they then went on to establish their claim to political power; they finally applied themselves to the acquisition of the benefits of a more refined culture. Hence, today, workers all over the world refuse to be treated as if they were at the arbitrary disposition of others. They insist that they should always be regarded as human beings with a share in every sector of human society—in the sphere of economics, social activity, political life, learning and culture. . . .

Again with reference to the international field, the Pope speaks as follows of the end of the colonial age:

> Since all nations have either achieved or are on the way to achieving independence there will soon no longer exist a world divided into ruling powers and people subject to them. Men all over the world have today, or will soon have, the rank of citizens in independent nations. . . . The conviction that all men are equal in virtue of their dignity as human beings has been generally accepted. Hence racial discrimination, at least as a theoretical notion, no longer wins acceptance. This is of fundamental importance for the establishment of human society based on the principles outlined above. . . .
>
> When the relations between citizens are expressed in terms of rights and duties, men become conscious of spiritual values, come to understand the meaning of truth, justice, charity and freedom, and become conscious that they are members of a society based on these values.

There is surely nothing in these passages with which the most thorough-going Marxist would not find himself in agreement. The possibility of genuine dialogue is, therefore, manifest. May we hope that, as in the political sphere, the cold war has tended to thaw out, so in this larger world of basic human values, the hostility which has prevailed between Catholics and Marxists will rapidly disappear.

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D. B. Runcorn

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KARL MARX was a German-Jew living for the latter part of his life in England. He has been described as the last of the great Hebrew prophets; a prophet without honour in his own country seeking an honour without profit in this country. His place of working—the British Museum, was perhaps symbolical of both his indebtedness to the past and the inspiration he drew from it and also his belief that history has meaning. His place of burial, Highgate, pointing to the fact that he believed he had a message for the future.

What was that message? "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." Thus Marx believed that the events of this world have meaning and there is an answer to the question where will it all end. For later in the Manifesto Marx speaks of the class struggles nearing "the decisive hour". In other words history is working up to a climax—a day of Judgment and the end of class struggles.

Message of the Prophets

Here is the authentic message of the prophets coming to the surface—the messianic hope, the conviction that a glorious future awaits the chosen people, in this case the proletariat when the messianic age dawns. These future hopes are not based on reason and logic but are a tremendous act of faith. We may note in passing Christopher Hollis's observation that the reason why the Russians were the first to embrace Communism was because they are a profoundly messianic people.

There is nothing more powerful than the belief that one is moving with the tide of history and one can actually hasten the day of final triumph. This is what gripped Marx and the fact that his eschatology was entirely related to this world should cause no surprise as this is equally true of much thinking in the Old Testament.

The prophets would have agreed with Marx that history is to be taken seriously and that it is one of struggle, of tension and dialectic. Listen to that proletarian prophet Micah—"Woe to them that devise iniquity . . . they covet fields and seize them . . . they oppress a man and his house".

In the country the rich so often have almost the power of life and death for the labourer's opportunities and means of work, his home, his standing ground were the property of one man. This is the state of wrong that Micah attacks. The increasing prosperity and wealth concentrated in the hands of the few was becoming a threat of extermination to the poor. Micah goes on to foretell God's judgment on these wicked landlords and how their property will be seized and appropriated. "In that day they will say 'we are utterly ruined . . . among our captors he divides our fields'."

Compare that with these words:

> "You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is, the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society."

The Old Testament prophets believed that the history of all hitherto existing society is a history of struggle—a struggle between a working God and selfish men. This is a crass struggle for man cannot win. The earth is the Lord's not the landlords. Only God has the ultimate right to claim property as his own, to call it private. God's nature is always to give Himself and His things to man. Anything He gives man He expects him to share with other men and make it public and common.

Theory and Practice

The climax of God's self-giving was in the coming of Jesus Christ. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. This was the Day of Judgment for the world—the decisive moment of history. The final struggle took place on Good Friday. To the world it seemed as if God was appropriated and then abolished. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose religion be it noted certainly did not make him submissive and helpless, for it was in a German prison that he ended his days, wrote these words:

> "God allows himself to be edged out of the world and on to the cross. The God who makes us live in this world without using him as a working hypothesis is the God before whom we are ever standing.
>
> "It is not by his omnipotence that Christ helps us but by his weakness and suffering."[1]

This leads on to the saying of Marx that "the philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways; the point however is to change it". Theory and practice must go together. As Jesus said "Not everyone that says to me Lord Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he that does the will of my Father who is in heaven".

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[1] *Letters and Papers from Prison.* Dietrich Bonhoeffer, S.C.M. Press, 1953.

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Neither Marxism nor Christianity are under any illusions about the inherent greed and selfishness of man. This is the way we both look at the world and we long to see something done about it. Marx would have agreed with the earnest desire of the prophet Amos—"let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream".

Christian View of the World

How do we look at the world and how do we change it? We see it first of all as a world that God loves—"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life" (St. John 3, v. 16). This is not theory; it has actually been demonstrated in history. This emphasises the point that God's revelation of himself is not to be found so much in nature or science but in history. The heart of Christianity is the saving acts of God in history —Jesus Christ born, died, buried, rose again the third day and appeared to his friends. Thus God was and is involved in the material things of this world. As William Temple used to say "Christianity is the most material of all religions". Thus man is not left to cope with his problems on his own. God in Jesus Christ loves all men. In the book *Pro-Existence*, Elizabeth Adler, an East German, has collected together sermons and addresses given by Christians in East Germany. One of them is entitled "Jesus Christ the God of the Godless". Here are three brief extracts from that address:

> "If anyone fights against God, he already suspects that he does exist after all—people do not go fighting when they do not really think there is anything there."
>
> "The positive thing about atheism is that a person who lives without God has abandoned any attempt to create an image of God and so at any rate does not run the risk of worshipping a caricature of him."
>
> "Jesus Christ is the God of the godless; He will not let go of the godless. That his how He became my God".[2]

In the beginning man was created perfect; the Bible pictures him in a garden where everything was lovely. That is the thesis. Then man was tempted to eat of the tree of life, that is to acquire the private ownership of the means of production and this led symbolically to the making of fig leaves. This was the antithesis for man could no longer face God and he had to leave the garden. From then onwards there were deep set contradictions within man.

The climax of the dialectic struggle was the coming of Jesus Christ. It is through Him that a synthesis is achieved for we can become new people in Christ. This is the way the world is changed.

Death and Life

Is this "pie in the sky when you die"? No, it is pie NOW. Eternal life is not some vague thing in the remote future. It is something God offers us now and something which death cannot destroy. The new life in Christ involves a dying, a dying to self and not a clinging to life. It is seeing life as something on loan to us which we must ever be ready to give back. This daily surrender of self is pie now, that is eternal life.

Making sense of death in this way means a making sense of life; a reverence for death leads to a reverence for life. A reverence for such things as truth, beauty, kindness, love, a respect for one another and for personal relationships. Here in conclusion let a Christian in East Germany speak:

> "Two of them sat opposite me; an old Communist and a young one. I absolutely had to go to vote in a plebiscite 'for peace'. 'So this plebiscite in which you want my vote "for peace" also depends inseparably on faith in the truth of Lenin's "Scientific socialism"?'
>
> 'Yes, sir'.
>
> 'But you see, I don't have this faith'.
>
> It was almost breathtaking to see how the two of them reacted to this unexpected conclusion. They looked at me aghast.
>
> 'What, then, takes the place of this faith for you?'
>
> And now began a three-hour conversation about obedience to God's law, about the reality of God, about our sinful hearts and the Church.
>
> 'How can God be real, if he is not material? Only material is real!'
>
> I answered with the counter-question, whether the love (and trust) which he and his wife had for each other was real and whether it was material which he could prove by test and experiment. We agreed then that his concept of reality didn't even suffice to explain human beings and their relation to each other. He thought it over and put to me the surprising question: 'But suppose I deny that love and trust between two people are realities?'
>
> 'Then', said I, 'I am sorry for you in your marriage.'
>
> With this, the human being in him broke through: 'You're right. Life would be nightmare then.'
>
> I showed him then that the whole of Marxism gives no answer to the question, what the death of a human being really is, and that therefore it cannot answer the question what a man is, because we exist only as men who die. Here lurks the real evil in our lives, for which Marxism offers no help.
>
> In parting, the functionary, a young married worker, said to me: 'Herr Pastor, I'll tell you frankly, this was my first encounter with the Church. You have told me things which concern me deeply. May I come to you again and hear more about Christianity?' "[3]

[2] *Pro-Existence Papers* edited by Elizabeth Adler, S.C.M. Press, 1964.

[3] *A Christian in E. Germany*. Johannes Hamel, S.C.M. Press, 1960.

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No Room for Homo sapiens?

Stanislav Strumilin

We print below two articles by Soviet writers on the problem discussed by Ivor Montagu in the June issue of Marxism Today—"*No Room for Homo sapiens?*". *The article by Academician Strumilin was published in the* Literaturnaya Gazeta *of May 28th, 1966, under the title "Does Overpopulation Threaten our Planet?". That of E. Arab Ogly was published in the June 11th issue of the same journal under the title "Scientific Calculation or Spontaneity". The subtitles are ours.*

A WIDE range of questions has been dealt with in the discussion of population problems on the pages of *Literaturnaya Gazeta*. In my contribution to it, I should like to dwell on Neo-Malthusian theory and practice, which call for very strong criticism.

Back in 1913, Vladimir Lenin wrote with full conviction that: ". . . we are unconditionally the enemies of Neo-Malthusianism, suited only to unfeeling and egotistic petty-bourgeois couples, who whisper in scared voices: 'God grant we manage somehow by ourselves. So much the better if we have no children'." The overpopulation danger that many scientists are now writing about is, in my opinion, not real.

There is no need for us to meddle in intimate family relations, to advocate or forbid the use of certain tablets. Pills, after all, are not the means for solving major social problems. But the social theory of Neo-Malthusianism is inimical to us. And the great Lenin was right when he wrote: "Class-conscious workers will always conduct the most ruthless struggle against attempts to impose that reactionary and cowardly theory on the most progressive and strongest class in modern society, the class that is the best prepared for great changes".

Population Density

On the basis of present birth rates, the world population is expected to double in the very next 35 years. However, is all this so terrible? We know that average world population density did not exceed 24 persons per square kilometre by the beginning of 1965. Let us even suppose that this figure will increase to 48 by the year 2000. But after all, there are already quite a few countries right now which have exceeded this rate by far.

For instance, by 1965 population density per square kilometre stood at 88 in France, 157 in the German Democratic Republic, 177 in Italy, 222 in Great Britain, 264 in Japan, and over 300 in the Netherlands and Belgium. And yet not a single one of these countries, of course, would change places with any of the African republics where there are less than two persons per square kilometre. It is quite doubtful whether you would be able to find many persons willing to emigrate for their daily bread to the barren moon as long as they are not having a hard time of it here on Earth. There is no need to fear a high population density if it is accompanied by a sufficient rise in labour productivity and living standards. But first we must have a clear idea of the basic trends of population growth and the laws governing it.

In this respect, too, Malthus' "principle", according to which the population has a tendency to grow in geometric progression while the means of subsistence grow only in arithmetic progression, should be set off against another, which had already been established by Karl Marx in the first volume of *Capital*. Marx assumed that each mode of production had its own special laws of population and formulated the following law governing the increase of the working class: "Not only the number of births and deaths, but the absolute size of the families stand in inverse proportion to the height of wages, and therefore to the amount of means of subsistence of which the different categories of labourers dispose". But the labouring population becomes "a relative surplus population", with all the ensuing evils of mass unemployment, poverty and starvation, only in the definite conditions of growth of capitalist accumulations at the expense of a cut in the workers' means of subsistence.

Living Standards and Birth Rate

Thus, all the social evils connected with threats of even relative over-population on one or another labour sector were clear to Marx. But he also saw far deeper into the matter, namely, that these evils stem from conditions of exploitation of labour. "This is a law of population peculiar to the capitalist mode of production," Marx asserted. So in order to deprive such a law of all its force, it is necessary to root out capitalism, which sustains it. This is especially strikingly borne out by the experience of the USSR, where the birth rate has already dropped more than 2.5 times since 1913, following the extir-

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pation of capitalism and a rise in the living standard. The per cent drop in the birth rate is also very appreciable in the other socialist countries.

A noticeable drop in the birth rate has also been observed here and there in the capitalist countries during the past few years, following successes scored by the labour movement and a rise in wages, but it was much more modest there than in the socialist countries, as a general rule, even with the great profusion of pills and tablets so intensively advertised in the West. For instance, the birth rate dropped by 37 per cent in Italy and by 22 per cent in Great Britain in the course of 52 years and by only 15 per cent in the United States over a period of 50 years; it remained at the same level in France and has even continued to mount in the Federal German Republic since 1950. But the general trend everywhere is toward a drop in the birth rate with a rise in living standards in full conformity with Marx's provision that the number of births stands in inverse proportion to the height of wages. And if living standards continue to rise like that in the future with expansion of the boundaries of socialism and the might of the world labour movement, a further decrease in the birth rate will inevitably face us shortly with the converse problem. Instead of a frightening *surplus* of hungry mouths, ample *reproduction* of labourers at the given death rate will become a concern.

Malthus Repudiated

Heretofore, we had no such concern in our country simply because the rapid drop in the birth rate was accompanied by a still more rapid drop in the death rate in conditions of socialism. But there is a limit to which the death rate can drop. And in the past decade we have already approached it. As for the period 1960-65, the death rate even rose from 7.1 to 7.3 per 1,000 of the population. The birth rate, on the other hand, continued to drop. This alone clearly shows how credible are the conjectures of certain authors about the population doubling in the course of 35 years without taking into account the quite realistic and natural tendency of the birth rate to drop with a steady rise in living standards, observed here in our country.

We repudiate the pretentious wisdom of Malthusian practice, for, once having acknowledged geometric rates of growth of the population to be an eternal and immutable law of nature, it is ridiculous to try to annul that law by means of a couple of Malthusian prescriptions. As for conditions where retarded growth of the population has now become a law, the latter is hardly in need of such artificial bolstering besides. And these prescriptions are opportune least of all in the USSR, where, in conditions of competition with capitalism, a high birth rate is deliberately stimulated by the Party and the Government. Here birth control—a practice to the obvious detriment of the health instincts of motherhood and the interests of the country—even though not prohibited, is hardly deserving of public approval.

Malthus' principle, as I have already noted more than once in the press, is doubly refuted. Not only because, contrary to it, the means of subsistence grow faster than the population with a growth in technology, but also because in these conditions the population itself grows not in mounting geometric progression, as Malthus asserts, but in *one known to be diminishing*, the denominator of which tends at the limit toward unity, and the increment in population, toward zero.

The principal reason for such a phenomenon in conditions of a rising living standard should be put down to the actual changes taking place in the age structure and living conditions of the working class. With a drop in the death rate, there is a rise in the general length of life, a rise in the percentage of children and old folk, and a drop in the percentage of mothers accompanied by a rise in their average age, and, along with this, a drop in their fecundity, both per mother and, to a still more marked degree, per thousand of the population as a whole, including children and old folk. This age-shift effect has still been insufficiently grasped even by demographers. But it always leads to an appreciable drop in the birth rate, and, from the moment when the birth rate is no longer compensated by a drop in the death rate, the general growth in population is also retarded. Within the scope of this retardation, when the number of births, continuing to drop sooner or later finally becomes equal to the number of annual deaths in some country, the period of growth of the population in it will also come to an end.

But is there not a danger of the birth rate dropping further, below the indicated limit, with the threat of gradual weakening of maternal instincts and of mass extinction of the least viable social groups and classes?

An Imaginary Threat

Birth rate fluctuations upward and downward from a certain standard optimum for the whole of humanity, are not excluded, of course. But extreme deviations are in general short-lived and exclude themselves as a result of their objective inferiority. Indeed, let us take, for example, the practice of birth control on a quite extensive scale, as was done in France. In such cases, the average birth rate may drop even below the death rate, thus opening up a direct road to extinction of the nation. But what social strata and groups will this process of extinction begin with? Obviously, not with those that do not

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delimit themselves in reproducing a healthy progeny but rather with those that, because of hardships or other personal considerations, deliberately *limit* the size of their families to the fewest number of children.

But in that case such families with the smallest number of children will also be subject to extinction to the greatest extent. And at the same time, with a growth in the percentage of families with a larger number of children, the average birth rate of all families will also begin to grow again until it has once more become equal to the average death rate and a stable balance of these highly important indicators of demographic equilibrium is restored. Thus, the threat of over-population of our Earth as a whole is just as imaginary as the danger of the inevitable extinction of entire nations. There is no *necessity* for people to deprive themselves, by obeying this pernicious clerical doctrine, of a great number of unborn children, who could multiply the happiness of mothers and the social consciousness of all humanity to come.

The groundlessness of Neo-Malthusianism is obvious. This ideology is inimical in principle to the social goals of our country. What is most needed to combat it is a knowledge of the actual tendencies of growth of the population in our days.

E. Arab Ogly

THE rapid growth of our planet's population is a result of the so-called "demographic revolution" taking place in the world today. Scientists use this term to characterise the process when population passes from one qualitative state to another.

The process of this transition does not involve just a redistribution of the population by age-groups, but it is marked by its several-fold absolute growth, at the same time. The "demographic revolution" is not caused, of course, by some spontaneous reasons and, even less, by mathematical formulae and proportions, which only serve to describe it. It is the result of profound economic and social changes initially caused by the industrial revolution. In our revolutionary (in every respect) time, it has already spread all over the world, as may be seen from the Table overleaf.

There arises the logical question: does the human race have at its disposal sufficient resources on our planet to provide the growing population in the coming decades with means of subsistence? The overwhelming majority of scientists give a positive answer to this question and, moreover, cite data on the possibility of providing with food ten times more people than there are on the Earth today.

Resources—Actual or Potential?

Unfortunately, among convinced optimists there are also men whose optimism makes one recall an instructive episode from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, where the March Hare and the Ha tter devise an original way of solving the food pro blem: every time they want to eat, they move on to the next seat around the dinner table. When Alice asks them what they will do when, by moving thus, they have made a full circle, the Hare prefers to change ov er to another, more pleasant subject.

However, our planet is not a dinner table breaking down under the abundance of food, and we cannot make the annual population increment emigrate to a Wonder Planet. The economic and social problems of our time, caused by the rapid growth of the population, can and must be solved in a real world, even if the way is being paved to mastering space.

That is why it must be borne in mind, first and foremost, that all the usually cited possibilities for multiplying the output of food on the Earth, no matter how well founded the scientists' calculations are, though trustworthy, are actually but potential resources.

Maintaining quite correctly that the Earth is capable of "supporting" thousands of millions of people, scientists often forget to add what a vast amount of labour, knowledge and capital this requires and what other goals the human race has to sacrifice to attain this. The aspiration to create as soon as possible, and for all people on the Earth without exception, the conditions which man is worthy of and the desire to just "support" the largest possible number of people are not the same thing. The former is the motto of humanism and the goal of communism; the latter is just a survival of feudal morals, when the rulers plumed themselves on having more subjects than their neighbours.

The capital investments which any society can afford annually are not just a spontaneous magnitude: they are restricted by annual accumulation; and all accumulation means a deduction from current consumption. Depending on what they are intended for, these capital investments may be turned both to subsequently enlarging the per capita national income (economic investments) and to providing the annual population increment with the level of wealth already attained (demographic

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PHASES OF "DEMOGRAPHIC REVOLUTION"

	Initial phase	Intermediate phase	Final phase
	Western Europe till 19th century, rest of the world till mid-20th century	Western Europe in 19th century, rest of the world in mid-20th century	Britain, FRG, France, Sweden in mid-20th century*
Birth rate (per 1,000 people)	35-40	35-45	15-18
Death rate (per 1,000 people)	35-40	10-25	10-12
Life-span	about 30 years	40-50 years	70-73 years
Share in population:			
of children ..	about 40%	to 40%	22-25%
of old people ..	less than 7%	5-10%	16-18%

* The rest of the world has not reached this phase yet.

investments). Society must make the choice: either to double the prosperity of the invariable population, say, every twenty years, or to double the population and preserve the initial living standards within about the same time. One cannot eat the same pudding twice.

A Choice Must be Made

Of course, in real life neither economic nor demographic investments can or must be excluded altogether. The stoppage of population growth would lead to extremely negative economic and social consequences for all society. That is why in each and every society there is an optimum combination of these investments for the given country, depending on the level of the population's living standards already attained, its age structure, growth rate, etc.

The problem of capital investments confronts particularly acutely the developing countries where fifteen hundred million people do not want to put up with hunger, poverty and illiteracy and where the population increases by fifty million people annually. The governments of these countries are continuously confronted by the financial dilemma either to invest urgently funds into the enlargement of crop areas so as to keep up the production of food per capita of the population or to develop machine building at an accelerated rate; either to set up the largest possible gainful employment facilities, even if primitively equipped, or to concern themselves, first and foremost, with raising the productivity of labour, reconciling themselves with unemployment.

Even very little children soon learn that, when they are offered *either* a piece of chocolate *or* a ball, they cannot have both. But, alas, there are some economists both in our country and abroad who do not want or, rather, pretend not to understand this. As soon as they come up against this distressing dilemma, they do as the March Hare did: they just change the subject.

Why not debate the question how many thousand million people—50 or 100—the Earth will be able to "feed" by the end of the next century, with due consideration to scientific and technical progress? As if the larger of these figures will facilitate the efforts that have to be invested to solve the demographic problems of our age. One may produce faultless calculations to show that, as the longevity of the population and the share of old people among the total population grows, the birth-rate index shows the tendency of diminishing; it must be borne in mind, however, that this in itself will in no way reduce the annual population increment in absolute numbers: it is not the birth rate per cent that comes down, but just the birth-rate index.

Perhaps the most popular of all arguments among some Soviet economists is the thesis that the birth rate is bound to diminish in the course of economic and social progress, urbanisation, emancipation of women, etc. So what sense is there to worry now about the solution of the problems involved in the quick growth of the population, if they are bound

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to resolve themselves and fall away in the future?!

However, demographic problems are not dealt with regardless of human actions. Between economic and demographic processes there exists both a direct and an inverse relationship.

Demographic Measures

The basic difference between Neo-Malthusians and Marxists is not in the fact that the former propose measures for birth control, while the latter refute them all unconditionally. The point is: what importance do the former and the latter attach to these birth-control measures. Neo-Malthusians impose such measures for the sake of averting progressive social developments in society. Whereas Marxists consider that there is no and can be no demographic solution to the problems confronting mankind, that the solution of these problems presupposes, first and foremost, rapid economic development and profound social transformations. Demographic measures are no panacea against economic difficulties and social evil. At the same time, a scientific population policy, encouraging in some cases the birth-rate growth, or promoting, in other cases, substantiated birth control, may serve as an auxiliary means for considerably enhancing social progress.

Is it, however, permissible in principle for the state to interfere in spontaneous demographic processes? This depends, evidently, on the aims it pursues and on the means it resorts to in this sphere. We cannot but denounce, for instance, the measures practised in Nazi Germany to enhance the birth rate, which were dictated by aggressive aims—to produce as much "cannon fodder" as possible and to populate the lands grabbed from other nations. We must also reject resolutely all compulsory measures, no matter what good intentions they are prompted by.

The state has no right, of course, to decide for people how many children they are to have. But it may, proceeding from the current and long-range needs of society and from a reasonable correlation of private and public interests, find the optimum population growth rate. And in conformity with it, has the right to influence the desire of people to have a larger or smaller number of children and help them realise their objective interests and get rid of prejudices, as well as to put at their disposal the most adequate and safest means, so that the actual number of children in the family would coincide with the number wanted.

The implementation of a scientific population policy in developing countries involves, beyond any doubt, immense difficulties. These are not only of an objective nature, for instance, the extremely low living standards, but also of a purely subjective kind, such as all sorts of traditions inherited from the distant past. In olden times some of them were justified by high infant mortality, while others were caused by the tendency of various religions and sects to win the largest possible number of adherents. By wiping out illiteracy, educating the masses in medical and sanitation questions, protecting the rights of women and children and striving to eliminate prejudices, it is possible to expect various demographic measures to be successful even now, without awaiting the "prosperity factor" and the "results of urbanisation" to do their job.

For a Scientific Policy

Malthus' notorious geometric progression cannot make us give way to pessimism. On the other hand, I must say that Academician S. G. Strumilin's formula concerning the inverse proportionality of birth rate to prosperity offers quite doubtful grounds for optimism. True optimism rests on the certitude that mankind is capable of subordinating spontaneous processes, including demographic ones, and will ultimately be able to adjust the production of people just as it will by that time have adjusted the production of things, as Engels wrote.

This goal will be attained in communist society once and for all. "People of the future, conscious of their goals and masters of their destinies, will be capable of regulating the numbers of the population in accordance with their possibilities and needs. Being far removed from the idea of reducing the birth rate for the sake of preserving the old hierarchy and of pursuing a reactionary imperialist policy, they will consider birth control as a factor of equilibrium, planning and progress." It remains but to be added to this optimistic glimpse into the future, made by Jean Fréville, a prominent French Marxist sociologist, that people can even now start struggling successfully for averting world wars, for wiping out hunger and illiteracy, and for the conscious control of demographic processes for the sake of the future of the human race.

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Jean Feldmar

IVOR MONTAGU'S article is most welcome, for it is high time that Marxists examined seriously population problems as they exist today. I would like to comment on some points which I think he has under-stressed.

First—the decisive factor in population growth is not increase in the birth-rate (i.e. larger families) but decrease in the death-rate. This is why population growth is so much greater in the poorer countries. For there conditions are such that quite a small advance in food supply, or in the control of even one killer disease, may have an immediate and dramatic effect on the death rate. A notable feature of colonial countries in this century has been the appalling infant death-rate. It follows that an improved death-rate means not just a simple even growth, but a change in age-distribution, an immediate increase in the number of surviving children, and twenty years later an increase in the number of people of child-bearing age, resulting in still more children even if families are no larger. Population growth, once started, is self-accelerating. (For similar reasons, depopulation in rural areas is also self-accelerating.)

Rapidly growing populations are likely to have an increasing proportion of young children to maintain, rather than more hands and brains immediately available for increasing production.

Second—Ivor Montagu under-stresses the uneven growth of world population, and its effects. In the poorer countries the process I have outlined has already started, and no contraceptive measures can do more than slow down the rate of increase. It is precisely in these countries that the level of agricultural and other production is at the lowest level. Can they (in the absence of a sudden miraculous advance to Socialism) raise this level quickly enough to maintain their population, let alone advance their living standards?

Idris Cox is, of course, correct in saying that poverty is due to exploitation, not population. But it seems likely that in the near future population growth may increase poverty, or at best disastrously retard advance in living standards, because any significant advance means that more people, especially babies, survive. In rich countries population growth is slower, and production goes ahead, so the gap between rich and poor countries tends to increase. W. Clark (Director of the Overseas Development Institute) fears that we in the West

> "may find ourselves forced into the position of a beleaguered minority, living in a siege economy to protect our wealth against the rest of the world. Though Britain would not be alone—we should be part of a complex that included America, Europe and perhaps most of Russia—I can conceive of no position more soul-destroying than this—to be an affluent club whose large plate-glass windows look out on a festering and revolting slum".*

We are therefore faced with an urgent problem of practical politics—how to provide enough aid, and of the proper kind, to the poorer countries, to enable them not merely to survive, but to advance. But there is also a longer-term perspective to consider. Can we go on indefinitely demanding that all the wealth of this country shall be used for the welfare of its people? Or is it possible that socialists may find themselves having to demand that advances in standards here should be held back, in order to prevent a world disaster? While it is true that world disarmament would release enormous productive resources, this alone would not be enough to solve the problem of hunger and increased population, as Professor Bernal has made clear in *World Without War*.

There are many issues besides that of hunger involved in this question, as Ivor Montagu has so effectively shown. Not least is that of human rights, and the natural longing for children experienced by most mature adults. How much political interference and social pressure is justified by the need to limit population? How much indeed is possible while, as a Soviet wit has expressed it "the means of production in this sector are still privately owned"? The problem is so complex and disturbing that one can only hope that, whatever other ideas of Marx are out-dated, it is still true that "Mankind does not set itself problems which it cannot solve".

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* Speech to the A.G.M. of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, 25.5.66.

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